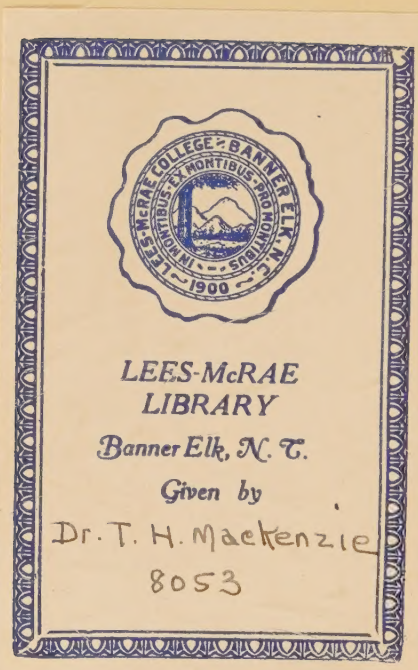
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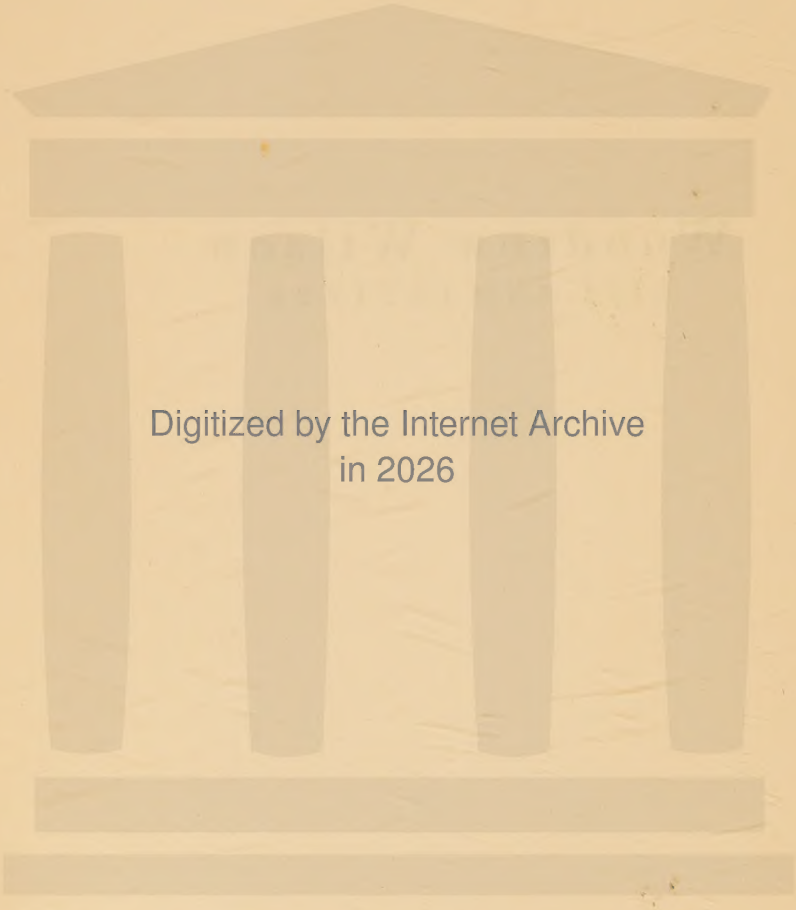

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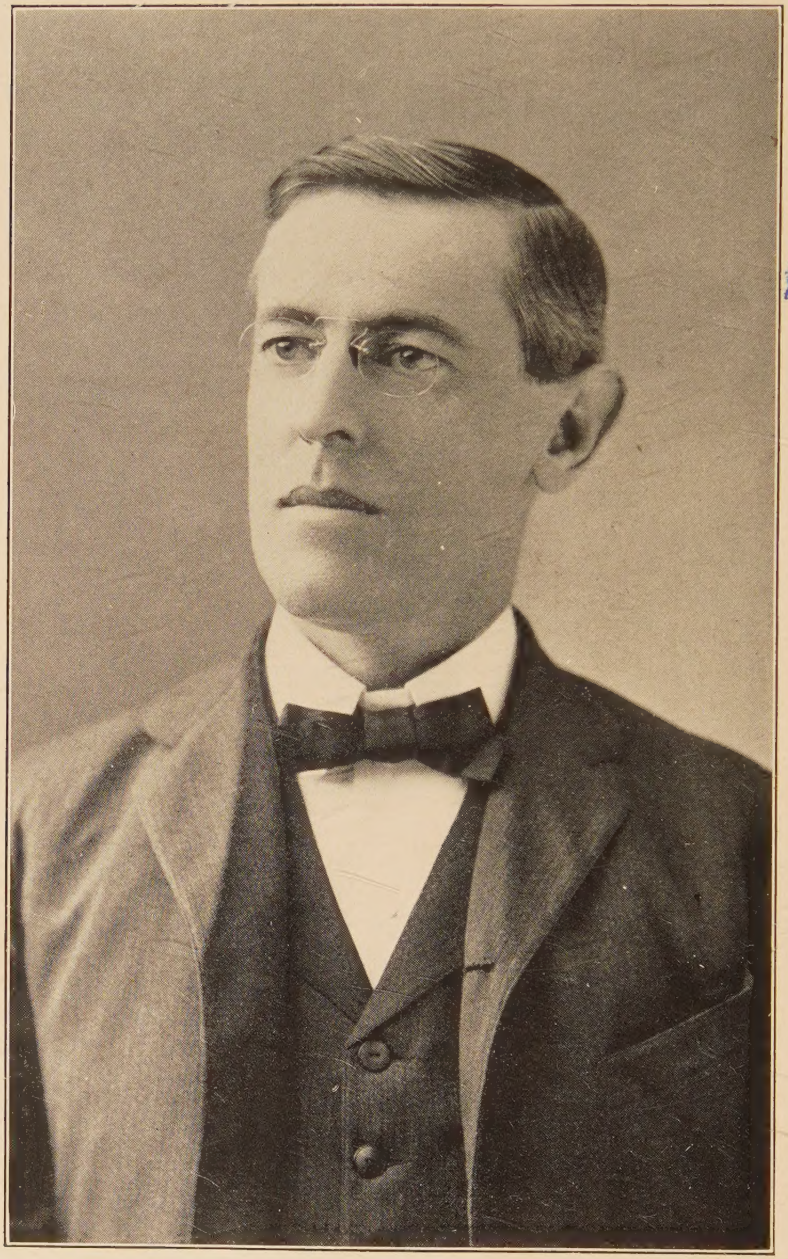

WOODROW WILSON IN 1902

Woodrow Wilson

LIFE AND LETTERS

Princeton

1890—1910

BY

RAY STANNARD BAKER, 1870-

Garden City, New York
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.
1927

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CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER XII. THE PRINCETON PROFESSOR: 1890–1902

§I Wilson Is Called to Princeton 1
II Finding His Place 6
III Methods as a Teacher—Hold upon Students 9
IV Premonitions of the Struggle to Come—Relationships with the Faculty . . . 15
V Growing Prestige at Princeton 19
VI Critical Years. 22
VII Intimate Life at Princeton 41
VIII Friends and Friendships 51
IX Discovering America. 67

CHAPTER XIII. TRAVELS IN EUROPE

§I First Trip Abroad, 1896 75
II With Axson in 1899 85

CHAPTER XIV. THE AUTHOR

§I Literary Ambitions 98
II Political Writings 101
III Essayist 109
IV Historian 117

CHAPTER XV. PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

§I Election to the Presidency of Princeton . 129
II Wilson's Vision of a New University . . 143
III Reorganization: the Preceptorial System . 154
IV The Builder 169
V The Critical Year 1906 190

PAGE

CHAPTER XVI. THE QUAD STRUGGLE

I The Problem 213
II The Battle 228
III Defeat 260

CHAPTER XVII. THE GRADUATE COLLEGE CONTROVERSY

I The Battle Thickens 275
II The Problem of a Million Dollars . . . 301
III Revolt 327

APPENDIX 358

INDEX 361

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Woodrow Wilson in 1902 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Ellen Axson Wilson in the Early Princeton Days . 40

Stockton Axson, Woodrow Wilson's Brother-in-law and Devoted Friend 72

"Prospect," the President's House on the Campus at Princeton 136

Trustees of Princeton University Who Were Strong Supporters of Woodrow Wilson 160

Professors at Princeton University Who Played a Prominent Part in the Graduate College Controversy 168

The Witherspoon Gang at Princeton in 1904. . . . 184

The Graduate College at Princeton. 344

LIST OF TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Woodrow Wilson's note for a Sunday address . . 32

A page of Woodrow Wilson's diary written with his left hand 37

Letter of Woodrow Wilson to Dr. Henry van Dyke 55

Page of Woodrow Wilson's original manuscript. . 127

Wilson's notes for his first report as president of Princeton University to his Board of Trustees . 145

Wilson's stenographic notes 237

Woodrow Wilson
LIFE AND LETTERS

CHAPTER XII

THE PRINCETON PROFESSOR
1890–1902

Princeton is no longer a thing for Princeton men to please themselves with. Princeton is a thing with which Princeton men must satisfy the country.

Address before the University Club of Chicago, May 12, 1910.

. . . the object of the university is singly and entirely intellectual. The object of sport, the object of social pleasure, is relief from the strain of work; but pleasure is not pleasure, and any diversion is professional, if it be not simply a relief from the main object of college ambition.

Address at the induction of President Garfield at Williams College, October 7, 1908.

I believe that we are engaged in our profession in a sort of minor statesmanship,—a statesmanship which has nothing to do with parties, but which does have everything to do with the life of the nation, that it is our function to think, not so much of the individual nor so much of the individual's profession, as of the country he is going to serve; and that our prime object in all cases ought to be, to give him such a training that, whether he follow this calling or that, he will serve America as America should be served, by enlightened and disinterested men.

Address at the inauguration of President Apple at Franklin and Marshall College, January 10, 1910.

I. WILSON IS CALLED TO PRINCETON

WILSON had made a brilliant record at Bryn Mawr and Wesleyan; he had written two notable books; he had contributed striking essays to the most distinguished literary and academic journals of the time; he was beginning to make an unusual reputation as a lecturer, both in

college and out: but it was the devotion of friends of the faithful class of '79, Robert Bridges chiefly, which secured him his opportunity at Princeton.

One of the extraordinary aspects of Wilson's life was his friendships. He had the ability of making a powerful impression upon many of the ablest men he met and of binding them to him with a lasting devotion. There were always friends at hand willing to work for him, push him forward. No man was ever more dependent upon his friends, both men and women, for sympathy and support than Woodrow Wilson. He wanted love, but must do his own thinking. All his life he was trying to keep his emotions apart from his thoughts—his friendships apart from his convictions. He would love without reservations; he must think coldly. Few men can do that or understand it in others: much tragedy is likely to flow from the attempt.

Wilson knew well what he wanted.

". . . what I am waiting for is a chance to give all my time to political science."[1]

And he wrote a year later that he was "on the look-out for institutions which can afford to indulge in specialists."[2]

He was absolutely clear as to whither he was bound, what he wanted to do. He was always sure of ultimate objectives. And he could wait, even hold back, somehow knowing, *Deo volente*—or "D. V." as he usually wrote it—that a way would open for him.

Bridges was working for his advancement to Princeton while Wilson was still at Bryn Mawr.

"MY DEAR BOBBY,

"You are the watchfullest, thoughtfullest friend a fellow could have, and I appreciate your friendship more than you can realize."[3]

[1] Letter to Robert Bridges, January 30, 1887.
[2] *Ibid.*, October 9, 1888.
[3] *Ibid.*, November 30, 1887.

There was at the moment a possible position at Princeton to succeed Professor Sloane, then being talked about for president. Wilson leaned heavily upon his friend, asked him "how to set about instituting a candidacy." He was doubtful about himself, feared his own initiative.

"My acquaintance with Sloane is of the very slightest character and somehow I have got it into my head that he don't think me 'any great shakes.' That may be all a fancy, however: the real trouble is that I would not know how to begin, or, once launched, how to go on. . . .

"I should be delighted to teach at Princeton the politico-historical topics that Prof. Sloane has had. I should doubtless be permitted to impart a more or less individual mould to the course. *But*—where-away lies the right course of action: what is the best initiative? You can best tell me that."[1]

Bridges kept quietly at work in Wilson's behalf, enlisted the interest of Dean Murray, and finally, on July 22, 1889, he arranged a luncheon with Dr. Patton, the new president of Princeton, in New York. We have a full account of it written the next day to Bridges:

106 High St.,
Middletown, Conn.,
23 July, '89.

DEAR BOBBY,

I was sorely tempted to let my five o'clock train go without me yesterday afternoon and stay over to tell you about the interview. There's much to tell—but, fortunately, it may be summed up with some brevity. Our conversation after you left became immediately pertinent in the most natural possible manner by my telling him, in answer to his questions as to the nature of the text-book whose proofs were calling me home, just my views as to the field of that book, the field of my own special studies. We went on easily into talk about Princeton plans, and the net result (a result to which I was able to make

[1]Letter to Robert Bridges, November 30, 1887.

a considerable contribution out of my own views) was this: His plan is to replace Johnston with a specialist in Political Economy; that done, he will be ready to add within a year, (by means of the income from "Brown Hall," the dormitory immediately to be erected) a professorship of "Public Law," to include the history and philosophy of laws and institutions, (the subjects of which I most wish to become and remain a master). These three departments (Sloane's and the two I have mentioned) will complete, at any rate for the present, the "School of Political Science," upon which Patton will seek to build, at as early a time as possible, a liberal and in every way worthy "School of Law."

As for myself, a tentative idea of his had been that I should at once fill Johnston's place, until, next year being tided over, a specialist in Political Economy could be secured, and I put into the new chair of "Public Law." This I discouraged because (1) of my obligations to the people here, who have been much too generous to me to be left in the lurch for next year (2) of my engagement for a portion of next year at the Johns Hopkins, and (3) of my disinclination to teach Political Economy. I have every reason to believe, however, that I am his choice for the chair of Public Law—and he every reason to believe that I would accept it. It will be the very sort of chair I've been waiting for.

That is the gist of a whole conversation, almost two hours long, in which he made me feel perfectly at ease and in which, consequently, we were able to get well acquainted with each other's minds. Your good-will and generous good offices seemed to preside over the whole interview. I feel that I now have still another proof of a friendship such as seems, in point of vigilance and soundness, to have been reserved for your creation.

I reached home *in statu quo*, have read fifty pages more of proof, and am now settling down to be lazy—luxuriating in the recollection of a most enjoyable visit.

I knew that you would want to know about the interview as soon as possible.

Mrs. W. joins me in warmest regards.

As ever
Yours affectionately,
WOODROW WILSON.

MR. R. BRIDGES

Afterward he went through a period of hesitation and doubt quite characteristic of him.

"I never feel sure of a thing—so suspicious am I of good fortune—till I get it actually within my grasp. . . ."[1]

He worried not a little because he heard no word from Princeton—Patton was notoriously dilatory—and indeed there was actually some opposition among the trustees:

"The items urged against me are certainly astonishing. I think the one that strikes me nearest to the line between wind and water is that which ascribes to me a learning and depth incompatible with ability to interest the boys. Would I *were* learned! It must surely be the influence of that unfortunate after-dinner prose of mine at the Alumni dinner."[2]

Patton, it appeared, was absolutely committed to Wilson from the first. A two-hour conversation with Wilson was quite likely then, as afterward, to commit anyone to him. Patton had bought *Congressional Government* and read it. A "sound book," he called it. When one of the oldest and most influential trustees, Judge Caleb Green, argued against Wilson, "He's a Southerner and will make trouble," Patton sent him Wilson's book. Next day, when Patton called, Green remarked somewhat grudgingly, "The book is not without merit,"[3] but he was still suspicious of the Southerner. Nevertheless, he made no further objections,[3] and Bridges steadily continued his pressure.

"Middletown, Conn.,
"27 January, 1890.

"MY DEAR BOBBY,

". . . You are the most extraordinary proxy I ever heard of: you act and converse for me better than I can

[1]Letter to Robert Bridges, August 9, 1889.

[2]*Ibid.*, November 6, 1889.

[3]From an interview by Robert H. Davis with ex-President Patton in December, 1926. New York *Sun*, January 18, 1927.

act and talk for myself. The contents of your letter has greatly reassured me. To have a friend like you—and, in this instance, like Ed. Sheldon—might almost tempt a fellow to do nothing for himself. I am honestly at a loss to understand how I ever won such esteem and friendship, —but I am none the less grateful on that account. . . .

"You need not be uneasy on the score of your assurances that I would gladly accept an appointment at Princeton. That is still strictly true, notwithstanding the new opportunities here. Though this is in truth a delightful place to work, it is not a sufficiently *stimulating* place—largely because the class of students here is very inferior in point of preparatory culture—comes from a parentage, for the most part, of narrow circumstances and of correspondingly narrow thought. The New England men among them, besides, have an added New Eng. narrowness in political study. . . ."

He was formally elected not long afterward, although in the meantime he was approached with an offer to join the faculty of Williams College, and Wesleyan tempted him to remain with the promise of the establishment of a new chair for him.

But Princeton was irresistible. Ever since he had determined upon an educational career, it had glimmered in his mind as an ultimate goal. He had been happy there as a student; he was overjoyed to return as a professor. He was to serve in the faculty for twelve years, and eight as president—more than a quarter century of his life (including his residence in the town while Governor of New Jersey) he spent at Princeton. Beyond any other place, it was his home.

II. FINDING HIS PLACE

Wilson moved with his family to Princeton in September, 1890. Quite a different appearance it was from the

day fifteen years before when the shy student walked up the village street with all his worldly possessions in his father's ministerial black bag, knowing nobody and afraid to present his letter of introduction to Dr. McCosh. He had now a reputation in the academic world—a distinguished reputation for a man so young and—if that were not enough!—he had helped coach a winning football team. We get a glimpse of Mrs. Wilson "looking surprisingly young and utterly charming," and of the three little girls, Margaret four, Jessie three, and Eleanor a little more than one. They went to live in a comfortable roomy frame house at 48 Steadman Street (afterward Library Place) only a short walk from the university buildings.[1] It was "difficult at first to find a place for all of his books." Here they were to live for six years, when they were to embark on the great adventure of building a home of their own on the adjoining property at 50 Library Place.[2]

When Wilson came to Princeton it was still the somewhat old-fashioned College of New Jersey: Princeton University had not yet emerged. While the number of students had increased since Wilson's graduation, the atmosphere of the college and the town remained much the same. Princeton was a country village, and the life was simple and democratic. Greek letter fraternities were sternly banned, and interest in the old-fashioned forensics of Whig and Clio Halls, while somewhat subdued since Wilson's student period, was still substantial. And the religious spirit of its Presbyterian tradition was vital.

But there were evidences of the awakening that was to come: an awakening in which Wilson himself, all unknown to him then, was to play so large a part. The venerable Dr. McCosh, who had been a power in the earlier days, had retired from the presidency two years before,

[1]The house has been occupied for many years by Professor Theodore W. Hunt.

[2]Now occupied by an old friend of the Wilson family, Miss Henrietta G. Ricketts.

but was still giving lectures in philosophy. He and Mrs. McCosh were literally worshipped by the entire community. Dr. Francis L. Patton had come in as president. He was a brilliant and magnetic preacher, and a witty companion, though a woefully inefficient administrator, and he was even more conservative in his views than the robust-minded Dr. McCosh. Born in the British island of Bermuda, he had been all his life a Presbyterian minister, a professor in two theological seminaries, a teacher of ethics. He came in at a time when the tendency in American education was setting strongly away from theological and classical leadership, toward a new concern with modern history, science, politics, economics, and sociology. Ministers were everywhere giving place to laymen in college presidencies. Wilson himself, twelve years later, was to be the first president of Princeton who was not a clergyman.

Patton recognized the drift, if he did not wholly sympathize with it, and was planning various new departures at Princeton—a "specialist in political economy," "a professorship of public law"[1]—plans which would conciliate the new without really disturbing the old. He wanted "new blood"—but it must be "safe." He chose Wilson because he was not only young and brilliant, but gifted with a mastery of language, a distinction of manner, a strong sense of the value of tradition. But he did not know the impassioned spirit of the man he was choosing, the deadly sincerity of purpose. A curious parallel exists between Wilson's election as a professor at Princeton and his choice years later by the old bosses as a political leader in New Jersey.

Men become great by going their own way; thinking their own thoughts; doing with sincerity and intensity their own work. And this is what Wilson did in the early

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Robert Bridges, July 23, 1889.

smooth years at Princeton. Everything was serene, everything interesting. A brilliant group of men were in the faculty. William M. Sloane was professor of history and political science; Henry F. Osborn, who became afterward the creative genius of the American Museum of Natural History, was professor of comparative anatomy; Henry B. Fine, since for many years dean of the university and one of Wilson's most intimate and devoted friends through all the years, was professor of mathematics; and Andrew F. West, afterward dean of the graduate school, himself a Scotchman by origin, and in later years one of Wilson's bitterest opponents, was professor of Latin.

Wilson lectured on American constitutional law, international law, English common law, and administration, but the subjects in which he himself took the keenest interest were the courses in public law, "its historical derivation, its practical sanctions, its typical outward forms, its evidence as to the nature of the state and as to the character and scope of political sovereignty," and general jurisprudence, "the philosophy of law and of personal rights." These courses—all of them—dealt with the subjects which represented his deepest and most passionate interest—how mankind acts politically.

III. METHODS AS A TEACHER—HOLD UPON STUDENTS

Wilson's method as a teacher was to read slowly from a memorandum four or five general statements so that they could be taken down easily by the students. After that he would develop, embroider, and elaborate the subject at length in a lecture full of wit, vivid bits of description, graphic characterization, to the fascination of his hearers. He would often comment with spice and penetration on current politics and political leaders, with the clear understanding which was never violated, that he was not to be reported in the press. His lecture room,

one of the largest in the university, accommodated more than four hundred students, and in some of his courses in the later years of his professorship every seat was taken. A large correspondence by the author with former Princeton students who sat under Wilson reveals an almost unvarying testimony to his power.

"One of the most inspiring teachers a student ever had —a tremendous influence."[1]

Some of them wrote of their indelible memories of certain lectures or parts of lectures:

"I still recall the vividness with which he described the scene in Greyfriars churchyard, when on a grim, forbidding Sunday morning in February, 1638, under the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, the stern and determined citizens of Scotland signed their names to the Covenant on a flat tombstone just outside the door. Years afterward, with his description of this event still in mind, I took my daughter to Greyfriars churchyard, just to let her see where the event occurred. To Wilson it was one of the outstanding events in the long struggle for liberty. It was here that freedom of conscience took its root, and my notes show something of the earnestness with which he described the General Assembly that met in November, 1638, in Glasgow, under the leadership of the Reverend Alexander Henderson, with Johnston of Warristoun as clerk.

"Mr. Wilson was always at his best in his description of events like this. His enthusiasm was contagious, and we who had the privilege of listening to his lectures came away feeling that we had been in the presence of some Elisha upon whom the mantel of the old prophets of liberty had fallen."[2]

He had the power of making an imprint upon the minds

[1] Raymond B. Fosdick to the author.

[2] *Ibid.*

of students, certain students, that was to influence their whole lives, and bind them to him as the Scholar, in the old sense, was bound to the Master. Roland Morris, of the class of 1896, relates that he first met Wilson when he was a student at Lawrenceville School in 1890. He was then only sixteen years old, and he walked to Princeton to invite the young Professor Wilson to talk to the Calliopean Society. He remembers the profound impression the interview made upon him, and still more the talk on Burke which Wilson gave in response to the invitation. A year later, Wilson came to Lawrenceville again to speak at the Sunday vesper service. Morris said he could forget neither the topic nor the substance of that address. His text was:

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. . . ."

His theme was the value of vision in life and the necessity that every man should shape his career upon that vision.

Morris said that he had planned to go to Yale, but that these contacts with Wilson irresistibly drew him to Princeton. While he was there, he took all of Wilson's courses that it was possible to take, and got more out of them than anything else at the university.

In later years, Morris, like so many other Princeton men who had become devoted to Wilson, was his strong political supporter; and Wilson later appointed him Ambassador to Japan.

Another of his students speaks of him as an "absolutely inspired" teacher;[1] another says:

"These lectures lasted an hour, were delivered from a rostrum, and they were brilliant political addresses. I heard Mr. Wilson make a number of speeches after he entered political life, but many of his lectures at Princeton

[1]The Hon. Breckinridge Long.

were equally interesting. The students would frequently burst into spontaneous applause and cheer his remarks."[1]

And one of his fellow professors said of his teaching:

"Young men were seized with a thrill of expectancy when he entered to begin a lecture."[2]

Such was the impression that Wilson made that, when he came years later upon the national stage, former students of his who had become convinced that "Wilson was both relatively and absolutely great"[3] were among his stoutest supporters.

Wilson was more of a lecturer than a teacher; and there is weight in the remark of one of his former students that he often gave too much, demanded too little. He was not too anxious to "find out afterwards how many of his facts had penetrated." He was not indeed interested in facts at all, as facts—but in what the facts meant in terms of life and action. Always while he was trying to make his students visualize the organic life of society, the significance of political institutions, he was on fire with the purpose of inspiring them to apply his teachings to the problems immediately before the country—as he himself was doing. He was always challenging their latent idealism. He was always, like his forbears, a preacher as well as a teacher. And it was a preaching shot through with courage, hope, faith, and with knowledge and practical ideals.

Wilson was himself fascinated with the work at Princeton. He wrote to his friend Dabney:

"My work here is proving very stimulating indeed: it is like lecturing constantly to cultivated audiences, for my electives number about 160 men each; and it stimulates me immensely to have to interest so many minds in the

[1]Peyton Cochran to the author.

[2]Dr. John H. Finley, in an address before the American Philosophical Society.

[3]Professor Hardin Craig, in the Iowa *Alumnus*, February 18, 1924.

more abstruse topics of jurisprudence. Political Economy, which at present I have charge of, I shall presently get rid of, for we are to have a special chair of Economics. Then I shall be lecturing wholly within the special field of my choice, and shall expect to grow into some sort of power and success, especially if my dearest scheme, the establishment of a law school here on the Scottish and European plan of historical and philosophical, as well as technical, treatment, should become a realized plan. And everything is ready for its realization, except the money!"[1]

He was thus, from the very beginning, to take a powerful hold upon the student body. Year after year he was to be voted the most popular of professors in spite of the fact that he seemed to have certain characteristics that ordinarily militate against popular leadership. Something about him—a dignity, a distinction, a power—held him, in spite of his courtesy, always somewhat aloof. He had an extremely fastidious mind, a high level of exactitude in thought and expression difficult to adjust to the careless vernacular of the student body.

"It was a real grief to him to see a verbal arrow sent 'slackly to the mark'; and when inexactness or slovenliness of expression was united to a tenuous or mistaken apprehension of fact, he was sometimes almost revolted. I have heard him declare: 'I positively am not able to read and correct more than ten or twelve papers a day.' As there were often more than two hundred pupils in a single one of his classes, it may be imagined that the torture was sometimes prolonged."[2]

For the same reason, he dreaded to listen to intercollegiate debates. It was not that he was not thoroughly interested in debating. He was always ready to assist in

[1]July 1, 1891.

[2]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

coaching the Princeton team, but his intense interest made him impatient of the ineptitude in statement or rejoinder of those whom he had assisted in training. He was embarrassed for them.

"I have seen him pacing back and forth through the ambulatory of the Commencement hall when a debate was in progress, unable to keep away, and still less able to sustain the verbal affront which the crudeness and immaturity of his protégés were almost certain to inflict."[1]

In spite of all these things, however, he was popular. He was one of that rare type of men who could be popular without stooping to be familiar.

From the very beginning of his service as a Princeton professor he was class officer for the seniors and later a member of the committee on discipline. Many a student remembers going to his home for a talk, and the courtesy and humour of his reception. He had an extremely strong sense of the law, of discipline, of duty. It was inherent in his Scotch blood, implicit in his Presbyterian training—but he was just.

In other and apparently quite contradictory ways he took a swift hold upon student life. His fame as a football enthusiast at Wesleyan had naturally preceded him, and he was immediately in demand to help with the Princeton team:

"Those were dark days for football at Princeton; graduation had left only three members of the championship eleven of 1889. One of these was the captain, Edgar Allan Poe. But if players were scarce, coaches were scarcer. It was, therefore, a particularly welcome sight, one afternoon in October, to see Woodrow Wilson come striding out upon the field, take his place behind the eleven with Captain Poe, and proceed to whip the team up and down the sward, a function which Woodrow Wilson continued daily

[1]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

to discharge through the long grind of ten weeks that desperate Fall."[1]

While his active participation was brief—his interests did not really lie in that direction—he was all his life extremely fond of football, and to an even greater degree of baseball. He served as a member of the faculty committee on outdoor sports.

"Cousin Woodrow was very keen about games. I shall never forget my amazement when, at a Yale-Princeton baseball game he—usually so controlled—sprang to his feet, waved his umbrella, and yelled like a madman!

"'I beg your pardon, Cousin Mary; that was a Princeton play.'"[2]

We have a picture of him at another time, standing throughout a Princeton-Harvard game on top of a fence-post, not being able to get a seat: and he refers repeatedly in his letters to the triumphs and defeats of Princeton. There was something in the stern struggle of strong men that set his blood to going.

IV. PREMONITIONS OF THE STRUGGLE TO COME—RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FACULTY

Wilson soon began also to make himself strongly felt in the faculty. Before he had been at Princeton two years, there were premonitory rumblings of the division that was to come. It was inevitable that this should be so. Wilson was a natural born leader—it was his genius—and a leader must lead. He had positive and deep-seated convictions, and was always powerfully and steadily on his way toward some goal that he considered desirable. Most men in comfortable places, whether in college or in political offices, hate change. They want to be left alone, the older men especially. But when Wilson felt that conditions were

[1] Parke H. Davis, in the Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, November 4, 1925.

[2] Mary W. Hoyt to the author.

wrong, he could not rest until he had tried to change them. Many times in his life he quoted, as "no bad motto," a line from Burke:

"Public duty demands and requires, that what is right should not only be made known but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated."

Wilson soon began to appear in faculty discussions as the leader of the younger set.

"It was admitted without question then in Princeton that Wilson was the most brilliant man among the younger faculty. He led us inevitably by his wit, his incisive questioning mind, his courage, and his preëminence in faculty debates."[1]

The differences were at first not serious, and yet, in retrospect, they seem somehow to have gone to the root of the matter.

One of the things that early concerned Wilson was the slack method in examinations and the fact that they were often disgraced by cribbing. In those early days, students used to visit the Wilson home much more frequently and informally than in later and busier times. Especially was this true of men from the South. It was Mrs. Wilson who was first aroused to the conditions that existed. It was amazing and disgraceful to her that learning should not be honest. When instructors patrolled the examination rooms looking for cheaters, students of course outwitted them. She found many of the best students sharing her views; and Wilson himself soon took up the fight. He argued that the students should be treated as men and held sternly to the responsibilities of men—not watched like children.

"He led us . . . in the fight for the honour system. . . . I recall that in one faculty meeting this topic was being debated, and one of his opponents made a sneering refer-

[1]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

ence to the phrase 'on the honour of a gentleman' in the pledge, comparing it with that false standard of 'honour' which in older days in England would not stoop to cheat at cards but nevertheless sanctioned the seduction of women. Nevertheless, Wilson carried his point against the opposition of President Patton, and it was a distinct triumph for the young faculty members who had begun to win an occasional majority vote in the faculty meetings for the first time in 1893–94."[1]

Here the issue between the old and the new was one of administration; there were also to be disagreements regarding educational policy, and Wilson was soon to find himself again in opposition to President Patton. It began with a discussion over a course in sociology which Wilson had arranged for his new assistant, Winthrop M. Daniels, to teach. To his astonishment, he found Patton stoutly in opposition to any such course. Patton was primarily a metaphysician and theologian, and a reading of Herbert Spencer had filled him with alarm lest the purely genetic portrayal of the development of the Church, the State, and the family, might destroy in the indiscriminating student his reverence for divine authority. "He was taking no chances with an evolutionary philosophy which he distrusted as essentially materialistic and anti-Christian."[2]

Wilson, of course, like his famous uncle, was a thoroughgoing evolutionist—just as Dr. McCosh had been—and he thought the situation "extraordinary and ridiculous."

"However, in this instance there was no moving Dr. Patton—I remember Mr. Wilson remarked once that Patton had 'paralysis of the will'—but whatever the diagnosis of the case, a compromise was effected by which, instead of lecturing on the dangerous theme of sociology,

[1]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

[2]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

I was to be allowed to discourse of public finance. Error in this field was but venial; in the other, apparently mortal."[1]

Like many an ardent young leader, on fire with his ideals and absolutely sure of his convictions, Wilson was perhaps inclined to go too fast, to drive too hard. His intensity of temperament, so much and so useful a characteristic of his whole life, was sometimes a limitation and led him into mistakes.

"He was a keen and ruthless critic, impatient of dullness. . . . I used to think then that his only real fault of character was his impatience with the slower processes of other men's minds, and particularly with some of the older members of the faculty whom I thought he treated with scant courtesy in debate. To him, of course, these men were reactionaries, standing in the way of the new Princeton which the younger men were trying to build up."[2]

Many stories are told of Wilson's way of meeting the calm assumptions of authority, of finality, of the older type of clergyman professor then so numerous in colleges of the type of Princeton. One of them had essayed, before Wilson came, as a minor activity, to teach political economy:

"On learning that Mr. Wilson was expected to give instruction in that subject, the old gentleman remarked with heavy emphasis—'For me, sir, there is but one political economist—Henry C. Carey.' To which the adroit but courteous reply was: 'Indeed; I had supposed there were others.' "[3]

On another occasion when Wilson read a paper on "Sovereignty" to a group of Princeton intellectuals, old Dr. McCosh was present. At the conclusion of the address the old Doctor grunted:

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[1]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

[2]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

[3]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

"Umph! I have always held that sovereignty rests with God."

"So it does, Dr. McCosh," responded Wilson, "but I did not go quite so far back in my discussion."

V. GROWING PRESTIGE AT PRINCETON

Wilson sought vigorous younger men as associates in his work, and these almost without exception became and remained his devoted followers. Men in his own department were unshakably loyal to him; he was unshakably loyal to them. His correspondence with Daniels and Finley and later with Garfield—and the tributes paid by them afterward to his memory—give evidence of the fine quality of these relationships.

"I, it seems, am to remain 'Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Economy' and so be head of the Department of which you will be the other member: in short, I am to be, for the trial heat, your 'chief.' I am sure that I need not assure you that this arrangement will not involve any real curtailment of your liberty in your work. It will be pleasant to be thus consulting colleagues."[1]

He was always a man difficult to attack. He could not be laughed at. And he had an utterly devastating gift of repartee when he chose to employ it. He was somewhat vulnerable in the earlier years in the matter of a kind of preciosity of speech, the occasional use of uncommon or literary words in his conversation or writing; and he had a dignity of manner which was sometimes irritating.

"I remember that one of his envious Princeton colleagues used to affect to bemoan what he called 'Tommy Wilson's jag of dignity'—a fling which was but the irreverent tribute paid to an old-world habit of utterance and demeanour to which the critic was an alien."[2]

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to Professor Winthrop M. Daniels, May 24, 1892.

[2]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

If he had been a solemn man, he might have been lost. But he was not. He had that intellectual nimbleness and grace which is the courtesy of the mind. It partook more of wit than of humour. It turned upon verbal felicity, smacked more of the study than Lincoln's humour, which was always of the soil. Wilson loved stories and witty verses, he had rare gifts of mimicry, and he used these gifts with skill. He was always picking up amusing incidents and retailing them afterward with delight. The ardent comment of one of his auditors after a lecture led him to ask:

"What part did you particularly like?"

"Well," said the adulator, "when you spoke of the 'heyday of reform,' I liked that. I've worked on a farm myself and I know what haying is like."[1]

His sense of humour, his friend Daniels thinks, was his salvation: it relaxed what might have been an unbearable tension of earnestness.

There were other elements in his growing prestige at Princeton. He was not only securing a powerful hold upon students and faculty, but he was adding lustre to the college by his widening reputation outside. His industry was prodigious. He was writing constantly for the foremost journals; every few years saw a new book published, books that made an impression; he was more and more called upon to lecture outside of Princeton. He carried forward his work at Johns Hopkins—twenty-five lectures every spring; in 1892, he began lecturing also at the New York Law School; in 1893, he made a notable address at the World's Fair in Chicago, and in 1894, he was beginning to be in demand as a speaker at Princeton alumni associations.

Naturally, all of these successes stimulated offers from other colleges and universities—the surest of all influences

[1]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

in buttressing his position at home. It is doubtful if any American college professor ever had more of such glittering chances. Within a few years he was offered the presidency of no fewer than seven great universities, to say nothing of opportunities in the faculties of several others. Among these institutions were the University of Illinois, the University of Virginia, the University of Alabama, Washington and Lee University, the University of Nebraska, the University of Minnesota—and finally, Princeton. His own letters regarding the offer from Illinois are interesting and interpretative:

"April 27, 1892. . . . The Illinois University matter, about which I promised to tell you, is quite amusing. The two Trustees waylaid me at my class-room door, told me immediately that they had come to look me over for their vacant presidency, and—proceeded to do so! I was not embarrassed simply because I did not *care* what impression I made. They were in the East, it turned out, to look at *several* men to whom their attention had been directed! They did not make me any proposition; but, since they can offer as much as $6,000, I consented to wait to hear from them, and to 'consider' the matter! They were very intelligent men indeed, and made a most favourable impression upon me. Isn't the situation amusing? Would you like to move to Urbana, Ill.?"[1]

Mrs. Wilson was strongly inclined to have him accept the place, but the more he considered it, the more he doubted the wisdom of it, especially when he found out how dependent the university was upon the legislature: how much of a "political function" the presidency was:

"I don't think that the evidence of such men as President White[2] and Mr. Gilman[3] would be at all conclusive

[1] To Ellen Axson Wilson.

[2] Andrew D. White, president of Cornell University.

[3] Daniel Coit Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins University.

as to my opportunities for original work at Illinois, because Cornell and the Johns Hopkins have both had assured (or at any rate *calculable*) incomes. The same is true of Brown, where Andrews is. I *have* heard President Angell, of Michigan, speak very fully of the life of a President who has to extract grants from a Legislature and manage a political board of Trustees; and Stock told me the other day in New York that Canfield (formerly a writer and professor in my own lines in the University of Kansas with three times the number of hours of class work that I have here), now president of the University of Nebraska (which is much further advanced in development than the Illinois institution, though originally of much the same sort) had said to him that he had once had great plans for original and literary work; but that since he had taken charge of the Nebraska University as president he had given up all idea of ever returning to books again. In short, I am convinced that what we are considering is, not the general question of *a* college presidency, but the special question of *this* college presidency. That the University of Illinois has (potentially) a great future before it I am quite ready to believe. I even think that I could secure that future for it, by devoting all my energies (including those of the latent politician within me) to the task, in many ways a very inviting one. But to do this would be to forego during the best years of my life my literary plans. . . . I am—after abundant reflection, as you may suppose,—deeply convinced upon these points. And I know that you will regard these considerations as conclusive."[1]

VI. CRITICAL YEARS

The years from 1896 to 1902, when he was elected president of Princeton University, were among the most critical of Wilson's entire life. They seem to have been

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, May 9, 1892.

even more critical inwardly than the years of the Princeton controversy of 1909 and 1910. He was forty years old in 1896. While he appeared brilliantly successful to outward view, while his influence both at Princeton and throughout the academic world was widening and deepening, he was secretly beginning to doubt the value of what he was doing. Secondary successes! His old political aspirations, his thwarted powers of leadership, harried him with unrest.

"I am so tired of a merely talking profession!" he cries out to his intimate friend, Stockton Axson, "I want to *do* something!"[1]

At times he feels himself held in, all but suffocated in the close air of Princeton while the great world of America is seething with the political problems and dangers of a new time.

"I seem myself to have become in so many ways another fellow,—more confident, steady, serene . . . enjoying in a certain degree a sense of power,—as if I had gotten some way upon the road I used so to burn to travel,—and yet fairly restless and impatient with ambition, as of old. . . ."[1]

He burned still to travel the great main road of affairs—and there seemed no way to do it.

"I should think you would like to go to the United States Senate," Stockton Axson remembers saying to him.

"Indeed I would, but that is impossible. In this country men do not go from the academic world into politics."

It was a time when serious men were concerned for the integrity of American institutions. Vast new economic and industrial problems were crowding upon the attention of the nation. A spectacular uprising in the West had followed the panic of 1893. There had been strikes and riots in Chicago; Coxey's weird "army" had marched

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, January 24, 1895.

eastward across the mountains, a vivid symbol of unrest, to present its "petition in boots" at the Capitol in Washington. A new sectionalism, the West and the South against the East, was developing. Wild new proposals regarding the national currency, and other easy cure-alls, were being advanced as remedies for the too-evident economic maladjustments. Cleveland had come in again as President in 1893, and Wilson had followed his vigorous and independent, yet conservative, course with strong approval.[1] The disturbances had set him to thinking more deeply than ever upon American principles and American politics. He had already made the startling discovery that there was a West, and that American history had been dominated largely by the pioneer movement, the spirit of the frontier.

"And the fact that we kept always, for close upon three hundred years, a like element in our life, a frontier people always in our van, is, so far, the central and determining fact of our national history. . . . The 'West' is the great word of our history. The 'Westerner' has been the type and master of our American life."[2]

He had also made another highly important discovery —that economic maladjustment was a profounder factor in political arrangements than he had previously imagined. He felt great changes, new forces in political life, which must be met by the spirit of our institutions rather than by depending upon ancient machinery. He began to feel the nation as a whole, to be aware of the need of a new understanding.

"The westward march has stopped, upon the final slopes

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[1]See "Mr. Cleveland's Cabinet," *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 198–222, and "Mr. Cleveland as President," *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 286–309.

[2]"The Course of American History," an address delivered at the semi-centennial anniversary of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, May 16, 1895. Published in *Mere Literature*, pp. 231–232.

of the Pacific; and now the plot thickens. . . . With the change, the pause, the settlement, our people draw into closer groups, stand face to face, to know each other and be known: and the time has come for the East to learn in her turn; to broaden her understanding of political and economic conditions to the scale of a hemisphere. . . ."[1]

Wilson watched keenly also the appearance upon the national stage of a new leader—the "boy orator of the Platte"—no other than William Jennings Bryan. He looked out at him from an immense distance both physically and intellectually—he looked critically, with sharp disfavour. He was against him, against what he stood for.

"We might have had Mr. Bryan for President," he could say in July, 1897, "because of the impression which may be made upon an excited assembly by a good voice and a few ringing sentences flung forth just after a cold man who gave unpalatable counsel has sat down. The country knew absolutely nothing about Mr. Bryan before his nomination, and it would not have known anything about him afterward had he not chosen to make speeches."[2]

On the other hand, McKinley, elected in 1896, represented most of the ideas he abhorred, especially the protective tariff. He considered that McKinley was merely the figurehead for powerful forces operating behind him.

"Nobody supposes, I take it, that Mr. McKinley was ever the real leader of the Republican party. He did not even play a really constructive part in the framing of the celebrated tariff law which we call by his name; but the country thought that he did and rejected what they deemed his handiwork in the most emphatic manner, by name and title. Whatever personal admiration Mr.

[1] "The Course of American History," an address delivered at the semi-centennial anniversary of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, May 16, 1895. Published in *Mere Literature*, pp. 246–247.

[2] "The Making of the Nation," an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 331–332.

McKinley may have excited by reason of the sincerity, simplicity, and directness of his character, he was clearly dwarfed in all matters of party choice by Mr. Reed and Mr. Lodge, and the real leaders of the Republican ranks."[1]

All of these things contributed to his unrest, the sense of his own futility. There was no constructive thinking, no real leadership, when the country was desperately in need of it. He himself could not take part except with talk. He had been powerfully moved all his life with the desire to serve and influence the nation politically, only to find himself, when the need was greatest, with no audience, no power. He was only a "literary politician." In a brilliant article on Walter Bagehot, with that very title, which he wrote in 1895, we find him expressing his own bitterness:

"Practical politicians are wont to regard closeted writers upon politics with a certain condescension, dashed with slight traces of uneasy concern. 'Literary men can say strong things of their age,' observes Mr. Bagehot, 'for no one expects that they will go out and act on them. They are a kind of ticket-of-leave lunatics, from whom no harm is for the moment expected; who seem quiet, but on whose vagaries a practical public must have its eye.'"[2]

He can lash out fiercely at the judgment of the politician —and yet admit that there is some truth in it.

"The genuine practical politician, such as (even our enemies being the witnesses) we must be acknowledged to produce in great numbers and perfection in this country, reserves his acidest contempt for the literary man who assumes to utter judgments touching public affairs and political institutions. . . . 'What does a fellow who lives inside a library know about politics, anyhow?' You

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[1] "Leaderless Government," an address before the Virginia State Bar Association, August 4, 1897. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 345–346.

[2] "A Literary Politician," published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1895. Also included in *Mere Literature*.

have to admit, if you are candid, that most fellows who live in libraries know little enough. . . . The ordinary literary man, even though he be an eminent historian, is ill enough fitted to be a mentor in affairs of government. For, it must be admitted, things are for the most part very simple in books, and in practical life very complex."[1]

There is something like appeal in his advice that "the practical politician should discriminate." There may be literary men who can really help him!

"Let him find a man with an imagination which, though it stands aloof, is yet quick to conceive the very things in the thick of which the politician struggles. To that man he should resort for instruction."[2]

It is clear that he felt that he was such a man. He had imagination, he had the kind of sight that was also insight, he could lead—but there was no opportunity for him. He was only a "literary politician," a "ticket-of-leave lunatic."

If these outside problems of political unrest were not enough, Wilson was also disturbed by the lethargy, the want of vision, in the little world of the university in which he lived. Here also he could see and lead—and there was no chance. He might try as he would to set his students on fire: the inertia and stolidity of the college tended to nullify all he did. The "dead hand of the old!" He could find no strong unity of purpose, no conception of what a modern university should be and do. Drift, drift!

Wilson's power as a thinker is nowhere better exemplified than in his attack upon educational problems. Many men of that quarter century had been thinking deeply upon the same subject. Two of them, Eliot of Harvard and Wilson of Princeton, came to absolute clarity in their

[1] *Mere Literature*, pp. 73–74.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

views and, while widely different in their approach and their conclusions, both were to emerge as educational leaders, and both were able to reconstruct important institutions. It is interesting that these two men, so different in many ways, were friends during all of the great years of their lives: they had a profound respect for each other.

Wilson was a slow thinker—slow in making up his mind—but once made up, it became as hard as adamant. He gave years of thought to educational problems before he expressed himself publicly. His first formal address was not delivered until 1893, after he had been three years at Princeton and eight as a college professor, after he had had actual experience as a teacher in three colleges and as a lecturer in two others. His subject was, "Should an Antecedent Liberal Education Be Required of Students in Law, Medicine and Theology?"[1] In the next year he developed much the same ideas in an important address before the American Bar Association[2] and wrote an article for the *Forum*, then edited by his friend Walter H. Page, on "University Training and Citizenship."

These were remarkable productions, widely commented upon and copied. They established Wilson as an educational thinker and gave him such a prestige in the educational world that he was the first choice—it seemed!—whenever there was anywhere a vacant university presidency.

Several of the policies which he endeavoured to carry out years later as president of Princeton are clearly set forth in these early papers. He sees, first, that education is not a matter of the mere selfish improvement of individual men, but a service to the nation.

[1] July 26, 1893, at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 223–231.

[2] "Legal Education of Undergraduates." August 23, 1894. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 232–245.

"It is the object of learning, not only to satisfy the curiosity and perfect the spirits of individual men, but also to advance civilization. . . ."[1]

He sees that, owing to the new scientific and other courses that have found a place in the university curriculum, there is no longer any unity of thought.

"Certainly we have come to the parting of the ways, and there is nothing for us but to choose a direction. The graduates of our universities no longer go forth with a common training which will enable them to hold together in a community of thought."[2]

And without unity of thought and purpose, how can the college serve the nation? There is no synthesis in university plans, and there must be a reorganization to secure it. We can see here the roots of the policies later to fructify in his plans for social unity, as expressed in the "quad" idea, and for educational unity as in his demand that the graduate work of the university be securely knit into the general organization. We discover also his plans for a preceptorial system clearly set forth.

"A considerable number of young tutors, serving their novitiate for full university appointments, might easily enough effect an organization of the men that would secure the reading."[3]

In short, in 1893 and 1894, nearly a decade before he began the effort as president to reorganize Princeton University, we find him clear not only upon general principles but upon some of the specific items of his programme.

When Wilson applied these well-considered principles, his vision of the "ideal university," to Princeton University as it was then constituted, he could see the glaring

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[1] "University Training and Citizenship." The *Forum*, September, 1894. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 248.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

inefficiency, the want of both constructive imagination and of progressive leadership. It made him desperately discontented and impatient. In this respect, as in political affairs, he felt himself a "mere talker" with little or no power to bring about the reforms he considered necessary. While he led the younger group in the faculty and there had been some progress, the difficulties at Princeton seemed insurmountable. President Patton was one of the influences that stood always in the way. Wilson's letters contain many discouraged references to Patton: "Dr. P. cannot be depended on for anything at all." After a struggle to get in a new man of force he writes, "What a virtuous feeling it will give us to actually *add* a *man* to this emasculated Faculty!"[1]

Coupled with all of these anxieties—both inside and outside the university—Wilson was overworking outrageously. His very disappointment and anxiety regarding his political and educational interests drove him the harder to his literary work, his lecturing. He could at least succeed there! He was of the kind, the Scotch Presbyterian kind, with whom, as he himself once said, "difficulty bred effort."[2]

We find him during the years 1895 and 1896 writing with a kind of ferocity of purpose, not only to produce the essays and political articles he loved to do, but to add to his income and pay for the new home he was building. We find him toiling over his *George Washington* and breaking under the strain of it. In the fall of 1895 he was positively ill.

"My illness went deeper than I supposed and has held me in its grip until now. I am still weak; but expect to get to work on the second paper again almost immediately."[3]

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, March 14, 1900.

[2]*The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 262.

[3]Letter to Howard Pyle, October 7, 1895, regarding illustrations for the *George Washington*.

"I am having very ill luck. I have been on my back again with a sharp attack of indigestion, which has delayed the map and everything else."[1]

One of his friends,[2] going to call on him at Baltimore in January, 1896 (he was lecturing there), found him working at his typewriter in a room heated only with a gas stove. He looked ill, and his friend chided him for lack of care for himself, and was told that he could not stop, that he "had to pay for his house at Princeton."

In March he refers, in a letter to Howard Pyle, to "hurry and bad health." One is reminded of Walt Whitman's observation regarding Thomas Carlyle:

"One may include among the lessons of his life . . . how behind the tally of genius and morals stands the stomach, and gives a sort of casting vote."[3]

Before the close of the college year in 1896 he was unable to work at all. He could not use his right hand. It was called "writer's cramp"; in reality, it was a severe case of neuritis. The doctors told him he must stop writing and take a long rest.

On May 30, 1896, he sailed for Europe. An account of this interesting trip, his first abroad, will be given elsewhere. He began immediately, since he could not use his right arm or hand, to practise with his left, and we find scores of necessary or intimate letters painfully and yet beautifully written with his left hand. Here, as always in later times, he faced his own difficulties and limitations, his physical weaknesses, with a kind of indomitable patience. His mind always rose above them; he allowed no failure to daunt him. Some of his friends, who never knew of this handicap—he was reticent always about such matters—felt aggrieved because he seemed to neglect them.

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[1] Letter to H. M. Alden of Harper & Brothers, November 30, 1895.

[2] Professor F. M. Warren.

[3] *Complete Prose Works*, p. 161.

Sunday, 8 Nov. 1896 Rom. XII., 6, last clause

"That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Not disobedient to the law, but disobedience of it: Free of all law by change of attitude towards it.

Spirit and power. We have prayed for an intellectual awakening in Princeton that she may be a University indeed: we ought to pray for a spiritual awakening that she may be a power indeed.

The Oxford Movement.

"Newness of spirit". = 1) Spontaneity instead of routine. No real power in anything (e.g. writing) done by rote.

2) A sort of self-pleasing vigour instead of painful effort.

3) A wholesome naturalness that is without cant or canting thought.

Vigour of faith a concomitant of all right thinking and feeling, the fresh and invigorating air of the mind.

The change illustrated in our own college life, where the things of truth and honesty are becoming not so much matters of law as of spirit.

Things seen in the fine revealing light of faith are the real verities of life.

Philad. Soc. 11 Jan. 96

Woodrow Wilson's notes for a Sunday address written with his left hand (except the date at the bottom which was written later with his right hand). The text is characteristic of Wilson.

"For almost a year now I have been suffering with neuritis in my right arm. For months I was forbidden to use the pen at all, and laboriously practised the use of my left hand. I am a great deal better now; but it is still unwise to write more than a few lines. . . ."[1]

His summer abroad gave him time and perspective to consider his problems; and he came back to Princeton restored in health and steadied in mind. But those who were close to him, like Stockton Axson, saw that a change had come over him. He appeared more serious, more determined.

"He had always been a purposeful man, but now he was a man of fixed and resolute purpose. . . . He grew more and more impatient of merely theoretical discussions; he must handle facts in all their difficult reality."[2]

That fall, October 21, 1896, he delivered his great address at the Princeton Sesquicentennial celebration. It was the occasion upon which the old name, College of New Jersey, gave place to the new, Princeton University. It was significant of his prestige that Wilson should have been chosen to sound the keynote of the new birth.

The celebration was one of the most noteworthy and distinguished in the entire history of Princeton University. Wilson's address came on the second day with Alexander Hall crowded to its capacity. Governor John W. Griggs of New Jersey presided and the first speaker was Dr. Henry van Dyke, who "recited, with refinement and deep feeling," an academic ode, "The Builders."

"When Professor Wilson rose to speak, the members of the class of 1879, who were seated together, stood up to greet him, but their cheers were drowned in those of the whole assembly. The oration was interrupted by applause at several points, particularly when the orator

[1]Letter to Dr. A. W. Hazen, March 29, 1897.

[2]Professor Stockton Axson, "The Private Life of Woodrow Wilson."

pleaded for sound and conservative government, and an education that shall draw much of its life from the best and oldest literature. At its conclusion the cheering was general and long-continued."[1]

Wilson's address made a profound impression. We have a vivid glimpse of it, partial, as such things must be, in a letter written by Mrs. Wilson a few days later:

"We are just through with our great celebration, you know,—the grandest thing of the sort, everyone says, that America has ever seen. It was the most brilliant,—*dazzling*—success from first to last. And *such* an ovation as Woodrow received! I never imagined anything like it. And think of *so* delighting *such* an audience, the most distinguished, everyone says, that has ever been assembled in America;—famous men from all parts of Europe. . . . As for the Princeton men some of them simply fell on his neck and wept for joy. They say that those who could not get at Woodrow were shaking each other's hands and congratulating each other in a perfect frenzy of delight that Princeton had so covered herself with glory before the visitors. And that of course is what makes it such a sweet triumph; it was not a selfish success, it all redounded to the honour of Princeton before the assembled academic world. How I wish you could have heard it; of course you can read it later, but then he delivered it so superbly."[2]

The influence of the address extended far outside of the college. It was published in full in the *Forum* for December, 1896, and there were liberal extracts in many other reviews, weeklies, and newspapers, and much editorial comment.

Wilson developed more completely the ideas he had so carefully thought out and expressed two years before. The foundation principle that education must not be

[1] Memorial Book of the Princeton Sesquicentennial Celebration, p. 102.

[2] Letter from Ellen Axson Wilson to Mary W. Hoyt, October 27, 1896.

merely to develop the individual, but to serve the state, is expressed in the very title of the address, "Princeton in the Nation's Service."

College instructors could "easily forget that they were training citizens as well as drilling pupils." Princeton must be "a school of duty," and duty must rest upon religion. "There is nothing that gives such pith to public service as religion."

In order to perform this service, the university must know its own mind, must know where it is going—in short, must have unity and purpose. The college must not be overwhelmed by the crowding demands of the new scientific studies. There must be a careful balance between the humanities, the sciences, history, and political economy. Wilson was later attacked as being hostile to science; here is what he actually said:

"I have no indictment against what science has done: I have only a warning to utter against the atmosphere which has stolen from laboratories into lecture rooms and into the general air of the world at large. . . . Science has not changed the nature of society, has not made history a whit easier to understand, human nature a whit easier to reform. It has won for us a great liberty in the physical world, a liberty from superstitious fear and from disease, a freedom to use nature as a familiar servant; but it has not freed us from ourselves."[1]

He then goes on to say specifically:

"We have not given science too big a place in our education; but we have made a perilous mistake in giving it too great a preponderance in method in every other branch of study."[2]

He makes a strong plea for the "intimate study of the ancient classics," for "explicit instruction in history and

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 282–283.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

in politics." "He is not a true man of the world who knows only the present fashions of it."

He closes his address with an eloquent description of his ideal of the university in modern life, and asks the question, "Who shall show us the way to this place?"

There were those in the audience that day at Princeton who thought that he was indeed the man to "show us the way to this place."

From this time onward, for the next six years, until he was elected president of Princeton, we find him thinking, writing, lecturing, harder than ever, but with steadier discipline. We find him working to recover the full control of his arm—"Spent the day in Philadelphia . . . afternoon with the masseur, having my arm massaged."[1] —taking up a system of exercises, learning not to work so long at a time—in short, acquiring that self-mastery that was the keynote of his career.

In the larger world of affairs, he was beginning to "discover America," as we shall see later, by making longer lecturing trips; he was becoming surer, and more vigorous, in expressing his views upon public affairs. In an address delivered in August, 1897, before the Virginia State Bar Association, significantly entitled "Leaderless Government," he sets forth vividly his views of some of the problems confronting the nation:

"The nation is made—its mode of action is determined; what we now want to know is: What is it going to do with its life, its material resources and its spiritual strength? How is it to gain and keep a common purpose in the midst of complex affairs; how is its government to afford it wisdom in action? . . .

"How is the nation to get definite leadership and form steady and effective parties? . . .

"These are questions of economic policy chiefly; and

[1]Extract from Mr. Wilson's diary, January 20, 1897.

Friday, January 1, 1897

Spoke at the Authors' Club, about one o'clock in the morning, – invited there to see the new year in, along with the Historical Ass^n.

Heard anecdotes of Wm Hamilton Gibson who greatly engaged my fancy:

He sought once in the N.Y. Libraries for a representation in co... of a certain very rare sort of butterfly wh. he wished to sketch for one of his illustrations; found it at last and sat down to make his picture. As he sketched one of the rare creatures fluttered into the very room where he sat, there in the midst of great New York, and settled just at his hand, and lingered there at rest, "as if," he said, "to have its picture taken." A marvel, surely!

He told one day, sitting up the piazza of a country house, to explain the markings upon the wings of a rare bird to a friend. Finding language a poor instrument, he walked to a cluster of bushes near by, thrust his hand within the leaves a minute, and came away holding one of the shy creatures nestling in his hand. He had that singular attraction for dumb creatures that love gives some pure men.

A page of Woodrow Wilson's diary written with his left hand. Wilson was no diarist, although for several years in the '90's he began writing on January 1, ceasing soon afterward

how shall we settle questions of economic policy except upon grounds of interest? Who is to reconcile our interests and extract what is national and liberal out of what is sectional and selfish?"[1]

These were the questions that faced him and faced the country. But he gives us a vivid glimpse of his own personal sense of futility:

"What would I have? I feel the embarrassment of the question. If I answer it, I make the unpleasant impression of posing as a statesman, and tempt those who wish to keep every man in his place to remind me that I am only a college professor, whom it would better become to stick to his legitimate business of describing things as they are, leaving it to men of affairs to determine what they ought to be. I have been trying to describe things as they are, and that has brought me, whether I would or no, straight upon this question of the future. . . . I must study affairs of the day as well as things dead and buried and all but forgot."[2]

It can be seen how keenly he felt his own responsibility, his own powers, indeed, if really asked, to answer—but he is "only a college professor."

He is more and more called upon for semi-public orations, and is beginning to make a real impression upon men who count. We find a letter from Theodore Roosevelt, then Governor of New York:

"Just a line to say how delighted I was with your address last night! It was admirable in every way."[3]

But the main currents in the nation seemed all to be setting away from the things he most ardently desired. McKinley had displaced Cleveland in 1897, the Republicans were in full control of the country. The Democratic

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[1] "Leaderless Government." Address before the Virginia State Bar Association, August 4, 1897. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 338, 339, 354.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

[3] November 16, 1899.

party was hopelessly disorganized, with a dominant leadership—the Bryan element—which Wilson considered hopeless.

In the other great field of his interest—Princeton and education—the outlook appeared scarcely better. The rifts were indeed deepening. The younger and more progressive group, led by Wilson, had become more powerful. Wilson's speech at the Sesquicentennial—especially the reaction in the educational world—had made a profound impression. Other men were beginning to see how far the institution fell short of what it should be. But the leadership here, too, was hopeless! Wilson speaks of the "sinister influences at present dominant in the administration of the college."

If the chances within Princeton, however, seemed poor, there were ever-recurring and brilliant opportunities elsewhere. The trustees and other friends, however, could not think of letting him leave Princeton. He was the "only stable prop of the college." They were determined to keep such a commanding figure at Princeton until the situation somehow cleared up. But the university itself could not offer him directly an increase in income, since he was already the highest paid member of the faculty, without creating a difficult situation. In this crisis, a group of friends agreed that they would contribute annually a certain amount to augment his income.

". . . for the period of five years beginning with the college year 1898–9" Wilson agrees that "he will not sever his connection with Princeton University in order to accept a call to any other institution of learning; and that he will not during that time give any such course of lectures at any other institution of learning as will interrupt or interfere with the regular duties of instruction at Princeton University."

The men who signed, several of them members of the de-

voted class of '79, were: Cyrus H. McCormick, C. C. Cuyler, Cleveland H. Dodge, John L. Cadwalader, J. S. Morgan, Rollin H. Lynde, M. Taylor Pyne, and Percy R. Pyne.

This arrangement gave Wilson, for the first time in his life, a respite from the hard problem of making the income of a professor cover the expenses of his family and give him freedom for a little travel. He could now give up the lectureships at Hopkins and elsewhere, and take more time for his literary enterprises.

But it did not cure the situation at Princeton. This was growing worse instead of better. As one of his friends in the faculty wrote to him in the summer of 1899 while he was in Europe:

"We have had several informal gatherings of the Faculty malcontents on West's porch. The excitement of the early days of the summer has subsided, and a sullen resentment seems to have taken its place in reference to the powers that be."

By 1900, Wilson had grown so hopeless both of his usefulness in re-creating Princeton and of his influence, either direct or indirect in public life, that he considered seriously the idea of devoting himself wholly to his literary work, and especially to the great book, *The Philosophy of Politics* ("P. o. P.") which he had so long been planning. We find him writing to the Princeton trustees, in October, 1900:

". . . it is my earnest desire to spend a year abroad in travel and study. . . . I feel the freer to ask this at this time because, now that I have an able colleague in the Department which I have hitherto filled alone, I shall not by my absence be leaving a whole Department neglected even for the time being. The time is most opportune for me because I hope during the present winter to complete a considerable piece of historical work upon which I have been long engaged, and so clear the way for the immediate

ELLEN AXSON WILSON IN THE EARLY PRINCETON DAYS

undertaking, upon my return, of the task for which I have all along been seeking to prepare myself, and for which my year of leave would be a final step of preparation."

But before he could carry out his plan, he was elected, in June, 1902, to the presidency of Princeton University. A wholly new life was thenceforth to open to him.

VII. INTIMATE LIFE AT PRINCETON

During all of the years of Wilson's professorship at Princeton, his home life, his social contacts and environment, were near perfection. If they had not been, he never could have accomplished such prodigies of labour. But his home life saved him. It was not merely the physical comfort that surrounded him, but far more the perfect understanding and sympathy of Mrs. Wilson, and the warm friendships of many of his associates in the faculty.

It was not easy to live on the income of a college professor: the letters bear ample evidence of the stern economy they had to practise. Wilson needed constantly to accumulate more of the tools of his trade—books that the accessible libraries could not supply; and he felt it necessary for the family to get away from Princeton during the summer for a vacation, however short. Moreover, the Wilsons, just as at Bryn Mawr and Wesleyan, always had one or more of their nephews and nieces from the South living with them and going to school or college. They were unremitting in their devotion; and one finds to-day a number of men and women who attribute all they are to the opportunities that Woodrow Wilson and his wife gave them during the years at Princeton. Dr. Wilson, often a guest, came finally to make his home with them—to his son's delight—and spent the remaining years of his life.

Mrs. Wilson was an excellent manager. It was she who truly kept the house, took entire charge of the entertain-

ment—"she set a surprisingly good table"—made most of the clothing for the family, did everything in her power to provide the conditions under which her husband could best do his work—and at the same time managed to keep up more or less of her art work. She told a friend[1] that during one year the four largest items of her clothing cost only forty dollars. She was proud of the fact that less was expended in some years to clothe the little family than Mr. Wilson used in buying books.

"I don't know how I can approve a gown which made you sit up too late—and neglect me (!); but it was certainly a triumph to make it for 30¢. . . ."[2]

She works too hard and he chides her:

". . . you are overworking yourself in some way. . . . I have noticed a suspicious absence from your letters of all mention of sewing, and other work, recently, and I know what it means. . . ."[3]

In addition to all of her other work, she was the indispensable assistant of her husband in his literary labours. Everything he wrote was read aloud to her, and she was his best and "hardest" critic. When there were proofs to read—and when were there not?—they read them together. They never made a task of it, but carried off the work with an unfailing gusto of interest and enthusiasm—indeed, with a kind of playfulness.

"When working on the proofs he would, of course, read aloud all of the punctuation marks. Afterwards at lunch or dinner his conversation would run along in the same style. 'So and so said comma quote Princeton will play Brown on Saturday comma quote to which so and so replied comma quote—period'—and so on."[4]

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[1]Mrs. Bliss Perry.

[2]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, January 31, 1894.

[3]*Ibid.*, February 9, 1894.

[4]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

Mrs. Wilson helped her husband in many other ways. When his hand was crippled with neuritis, as in 1896, she wrote out innumerable letters to his dictation and he signed them with his left hand. Sometimes she herself added postscripts to the letters, enlarging upon certain aspects of the subjects under discussion with which she was familiar. When Wilson was trying to persuade Professor Frederick J. Turner to come to Princeton, Mrs. Wilson enlarged upon the domestic problems that a professor must meet, incidentally giving a vivid glimpse of Princeton life at that time:

MONTHLY STATEMENT

"Food and lights	75.00
Servants	29.00
rent	42.00
coal	12.00
water	4.00
	$162.00

"These items with the exception of the *first* are exactly what we pay ourselves. Our 'food and lights' cost about $100.00 a month; but our family, including the two servants, averages ten persons, *two* of them being very large and hearty college boys! As a matter of fact when our family was the size of yours, I was able to keep that item down to $65.00.

"Mr. Wilson says he forgot to mention that the salary now proposed for your chair is $3,500.00 and he hopes to extract from them a definite promise to raise it to $4,000.00 in—say—two years.—May I add that you really could not *help* making at least $500.00 a year more,—people clamour so for lectures and 'articles'! It would be a great mistake on your part to suppose that Mr. Wilson is their only victim. All who have any use whatever of tongue or pen are seized upon! Mr. Wilson makes $1,500.00 every year; and last year when we were building, and he really

tried himself, he made $4,000.00 extra:—and almost killed himself doing it!—

"Please excuse this *very* informal introduction of myself! I have written you so many pages that I can scarcely believe you are not *my* friend too. With sincere regards to Mrs. Turner and yourself,

"Yours very cordially,
"Ellen Wilson."[1]

They were both indeed workers—but neither gave the impression of haste. They had attained the rare art of complete mastery of their work. One of Wilson's greatest achievements—partly no doubt a gift of temperament—was his extraordinary ability to concentrate. He learned to go straight to his objective, never making any false motions. "He never did anything twice."

"We often discussed the *mot juste*. I told Mr. Wilson that often when writing I left my desk, paced up and down the floor or lighted my pipe in an effort to discover the right word. Mr. Wilson responded:

"'I never stir from my key-board. I sit and hold my hand up and concentrate until the word comes!'"[2]

As a result of this intense method, he was not only able to do an astonishing amount of work but to appear always calm, leisurely, self-controlled. He never seemed hurried, he kept no late hours, there was always time for gay conversations and friendly contacts. His power of self-mastery increased with the years: it was one of his most remarkable characteristics.

Each year, quite methodically, Wilson made out a budget of the necessary expenses and an estimate of the amounts he expected to earn outside of his salary. He had qualities of Scotch thrift, and soon began to get a little

[1]December 15, 1896.

[2]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

ahead. By 1895, they could hope to build a home of their own—a great adventure indeed. Mrs. Wilson herself worked out the plans, making an especial effort to provide a study for Mr. Wilson that would be inaccessible to chance visitors and afford him the utmost quiet. When doubts were expressed about how certain parts of the roof would look when completed, Mrs. Wilson made a model of the building from the architect's drawings so that it could be examined.

"Your judgment is as good as mine in such matters, and your taste is much better."[1]

They had a period of not unfamiliar panic over the cost that they were incurring, and Wilson found himself driven to increase his earnings from his pen. He could even confess with some humiliation:

"You may depend upon it that it would not have occurred to my home-keeping mind to write a series for one of the vulgar-rich magazines, had it not been pressed upon me by the editor. It being proposed to me, however, 'on terms honourable to them and grateful to me,' I could not be unmindful of the fact that I was building a house, which would certainly have to be paid for some time, and the sooner the better. And so I did."[2]

On the day after the Wilsons moved into their new house, at 50 Library Place, a friend[3] stopped in, expecting to find everything in confusion. To her amazement, the house had a look of being perfectly settled, all the carpets down, all the pictures hung, all the books in place. When she expressed her surprise, Mrs. Wilson remarked that she had discovered that it was as easy to hire fifteen helpers for one day as it was to hire one helper for fifteen days, therefore she had settled in one day.

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 23, 1899.

[2]Letter to Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, November 11, 1895.

[3]Mrs. Bliss Perry.

Here they were to live in great comfort for six years, until Wilson was chosen president of the university. It was a house built in the English style, half timbered, with stucco, standing back from the street among large trees.

We have a charming glimpse of Wilson's study by a friend who was often in it:

"Mr. Wilson's study in his house on Library Place was in most respects the typical workshop of the scholarly college professor. Its location and arrangement—it had high windows—afforded the maximum of privacy; and while his working day was not one of long hours, it was one of intense application. Interruption of his morning's work was discouraged by the rule of the household. His study was a long, pleasant, inviting room, well lined with well-filled bookshelves. There hung around the walls some four or five crayon enlargements of photographs[1] of the men he most admired. There was one of Webster with his cavernous eyes; another of Gladstone; another of Bagehot; another of Edmund Burke; and still another of his own father. These were the *dii penates* in whose spiritual company he steadily wrought during the early years of his Princeton professorship. On a small table stood a typewriter whose click never interfered with the flow of thought which it served to transcribe. There was a notable orderliness about his desk and study. No letters or papers lay around unsorted or in temporary confusion. Books which had been used did not litter up the workshop, but were promptly replaced in their assigned location on the shelves. At the period I speak of, I think he seldom or never worked in the evening, but devoted it to the family circle, not infrequently reading aloud to them."[2]

Meal-time was the great family event. There were al-

[1]Made by Mrs. Wilson.

[2]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

ways gay conversation, good stories, interesting people. One of his daughters remembers how her whole youth was "coloured by fascinating talk."[1] She was anxious to get home during college vacations because she was so fond of hearing the conversation of her father, her grandfather, and "Uncle Stock."[2] Sometimes, after dinner, they would play a round or two of whist or euchre, sometimes "baggammon," as Wilson always pronounced it; more often they would sing old songs or read the great old books. Mrs. Sayre speaks of her father's curious mixture of gaiety and dignity—says he was a remarkable mimic and could tell endless dialect stories. She can remember seeing him dancing a jig with a silk hat tipped on one side of his head. She said he used to divide his family into the "proper members" (Mrs. Wilson and Jessie) and the "vulgar members" (Nell and himself). Margaret he designated as "proper part of the time and vulgar all the rest!"

He loved nonsense verses and humorous stories, delighted to read them aloud, especially *The Bab Ballads*, *Punch*, and J. K. Stephens's *Lapsus Calami*, and nothing pleased him more than a new story with a witty snap at the end of it, or a limerick.

> For beauty I am not a star,
> There are others more handsome by far,
> But my face—I don't mind it;
> You see I'm behind it;
> It's the fellow in front that I jar.

Another daughter[3] recalls an occasion when she was ill with scarlatina and her father and mother took turns sitting with her, since the family could afford no nurse. She remembers that her father had procured a large number of square bits of tile such as were used in one of the Prince-

[1]Mrs. Francis B. Sayre to the author.

[2]Stockton Axson.

[3]Eleanor—Mrs. William Gibbs McAdoo.

ton buildings then under construction and with these he amused her and himself in constructing cathedrals and college buildings like those at Oxford, explaining as he went along just what were the peculiarities of each one.

All of the sisters remember vividly the family reading both by their father and by their mother, their mother most of all. As soon as they could recall anything, Mrs. Wilson read aloud the greatest books in the world—the Iliad, the Odyssey, the "Faëry Queene," "Idylls of the King," Green's *Short History of the English People*, and so on. They also remember their father reading aloud to their mother while she painted.

It was indeed a family devoted to books. In a letter written July 10, 1899, by Mrs. Wilson to her husband we have a glimpse of a summer day:

"The children seem to be having a very happy summer. . . . We have settled into a regular programme now,—after breakfast stroll about the 'place' gather sweet peas, etc.; then we repair to the upper porch and our literary studies (!) in which we sometimes get so interested,—the children begging for more and more—that we go on till twelve o'clock. We are going straight through the *English Lands, Letters, & Kings*, with frequent extracts from Green and other things, and quantities of poetry, including Shakspere's historical plays. We are also studying the map of England very faithfully, and I am about to send for some outline maps of England and Scotland that they may record for themselves the places they read about. During the heat of the day they all read Scott devoutly. Jessie has read sixteen of the novels now. Then in the afternoon they exchange visits with Beth or Margaret Sloane. After tea they either stroll with me or persuade me to play croquet with them. They fell in love with croquet all over again at Beth's and began playing it with one mallet, three broken balls and no wickets, the sad

remains of their last set—the careless wretches! So I took pity on them and gave them a new set, 'for Jessie's birthday present!'"

Later in the summer she wrote:

"Our literary researches go on famously; we have gone all the way from Caedmon to Burns now, and the children seem to enjoy it all immensely. Mr. Ike Marvel has given us some extremely readable and on the whole satisfactory books for the purpose though with some few singular errors in perspective,—or perhaps simple oversights. For instance he has seven pages about *Hannah More* and five about Lady Blessington, and not a word of Miss Austin or Miss Edgeworth!"[1]

On Sunday the entire family went regularly to church, but not to Sunday school, Mrs. Wilson preferring to teach the children herself. They were all required, just as their parents had been before them, to learn the Shorter Catechism. They did not unite with any Princeton church, however, until June 2, 1897. Wilson found two rival Presbyterian churches in the village of Princeton where he thought that one was quite enough. He and Mrs. Wilson finally joined the Second Church and he was soon elected an elder. Later, he tried to bring about a combination of the two churches which he thought would allay rivalries and strengthen the work. Old feeling, however, proved too strong, and after eight years[2] a group of members, of whom Wilson was one, left the Second Church and united with the First.

It is truly remarkable, the picture one gets in the private correspondence and in the reminiscences of those who knew the Wilson family intimately, of the charming quality of their home life. George Howe,[3] who lived in

[1]August 14, 1899.

[2]On November 29, 1905.

[3]Professor George Howe of the University of North Carolina, a nephew.

the home in Library Place during much of his college course, remembers Wilson as of "a playful nature, playful both of mind and body. He loved to tease the young people."

A friend writes:

"His home life was as charming and delightful as that of anyone I have ever known. . . .

"For eight years I saw him day in and day out; in the intimate circle of his family life, in the formal meetings of the university faculty and committees and in ordinary social contact in the life of Princeton and I have never seen him in a bad temper."[1]

"Ellen made me very much one of the family—'This is your Northern home'—and twice I had college friends to visit me there. Around the house was a lawn which Cousin Woodrow mowed upon occasion, but he never seemed adapted to domestic tasks and I remember Eleanor standing by the window and encouraging him with, 'Nice Father, dear Father.' A group of the younger professors, including Professor Westcott and Professor Harper, met often for jesting and merriment. There were frequent calls from members of the faculty who liked the children and the home life. Princeton was very simple in those days, an almost ideal college town. Ellen told me of a friend who was visiting Mrs. Perry, I think. There was to be a reception, but Mrs. Perry was not well enough to go and the guest went alone.

"'I should like to meet Mrs. Wilson,' she said.

"'Mrs. Wilson will probably be there,' said Mrs. Perry, 'and she will be wearing a brown dress.'

"'How do you know that she will wear a brown dress?'

"'Because her best dress *is* brown.'"[2]

For physical exercise or outdoor games or sport, Wilson

[1]Edward Elliott, who married Mrs. Wilson's sister, to the author.

[2]Mary W. Hoyt to the author.

cared little as a participant. He liked walking, and during his period as a Princeton professor, it was a familiar sight to see him riding back and forth between his home and his classes on his bicycle. In 1898, he learned to play golf. He liked to tell the story of General Grant's attitude toward the game. The General, who did not play golf, was watching a friend who thought he did. Finally, Grant spoke up:

"That's very good exercise," he said, "but what is the little ball for?"

Nearly every summer, the family escaped from the heat of Princeton for a vacation, at first to the mountains of Virginia, later to the lakes of Northern Ontario, which proved so charming that Wilson bought an island for a permanent resort, but did not afterward use it. He also tried the Adirondacks, and the seashore at Gloucester, and spent a summer or two at Lyme, Connecticut, where Mrs. Wilson could carry on her art work. Two vacations during his professorship he travelled in England—both times because of broken health. But the vacations were never times of idleness or even of complete rest. Wilson laboured a large part of the time upon his books, his essays, his lectures. As his reputation grew, there were also long lecture trips, as we shall see, and a deepening interest in politics and public life.

VIII. FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS

Wilson found intense enjoyment in his friends, both men and women. His dependence upon friends and delight in them was a marked trait of his character. He shrank at times from meeting people, he shrank from going to new places, but once the ice was broken, no one could get a keener enjoyment out of social contacts or the changing scene. Again and again, in his intimate letters, we find him expressing his dread of a dinner he must go to, or some man he must meet, only to write joyously afterward of

his experience. Mrs. Wilson well knew this trait and was of the greatest assistance in stimulating new contacts.

Wilson's letters are full of descriptions of these fine and friendly relationships:

"I have not told you how kind my friends here have been to me in my loneliness. Magie and Dulles have fairly compelled me to take meals with them again and again; I have a standing invitation, already twice enforced, to take tea with the Fines on Sunday evenings; Dr. Shields has invited me several times and Sloane twice. . . ."[1]

He writes after a severe illness of Stockton Axson:

"You have no idea what helpful friendliness has cheered us all through Stock's illness—and from all sides. Of course the Hibbens have been chief among all. They were on hand all the time, before—and during the operation, and were of infinite use and comfort. And after all the *work* was done, they came twice a day to see how we fared. They have won our loyal love and admiration all over again, as of the true stuff from the heart out. . . . But others have been scarcely less kind and faithful—the Magies, Harry Fine, the Daniels, Mrs. Cleveland,—even Dr. Patton. I saw people come up the walk those first few days of greatest anxiety whom I had never before seen on the premises. It's good to know how kind and attentive people can be."[2]

During many years at Princeton, the friendships of a small group consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Hibben,[3] Mrs. and Miss Ricketts, and often Professor and Mrs. Bliss Perry, and others, were remarkable. Scarcely a day passed when they did not have tea together and spend an hour of rare good talk.

"For a long time, on Sunday evenings, Mr. and Mrs.

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, April 2, 1892.

[2]*Ibid.*, February 22, 1900.

[3]John Grier Hibben, afterward president of Princeton University.

Hibben, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Perry and I used to meet regularly for tea at the house of Miss Ricketts, and I think Wilson was always at his best on those occasions. If he could be criticized at all as a general talker, it might be that he sometimes seemed more interested in what he was saying than in what you were saying; but perhaps this is only like a skillful golfer playing against you who is more intent upon his own shots than upon yours. Certainly the conversational game interested him and fascinated him."[1]

Wilson's letters are full of lively glimpses of these gatherings and of his devotion to friends like the Hibbens:

"I went around to their house the (Hibbens'), as usual, at four o'clock, to find that I was to go to Miss Ricketts' alone. Jack has yielded to his conscience (!) and they were going to attend vespers at the chapel. I went off very much disappointed, and very abusive, to spend an hour with Miss R. and the Perrys. Mrs. Cleveland was kept at home by rain and the Gilders[2] ('the Gilders' sounds like a disease, doesn't it?). Three such good talkers left me free to say little and miss you and the Hibbens, like a sulky boy. But nobody noticed me! . . ."[3]

"Our only piece of news is, that the Hibbens are going to Europe,—will sail May 26th, and stay till February of next year! Doesn't that make you feel a little blank? It does me, very. They are not going for pleasure, as you see by the period set, but for work. Jack has felt for some time that he needed a little time and stimulation under European masters to keep him from going stale in his subjects, and he is now determined to freshen up,—next term promising to be as easy to skip as any he is ever likely to have. But, dear me, *what shall we do without them?* And

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[1]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

[2]Richard Watson Gilder.

[3]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 5, 1900.

five months, or less, after they get back we ourselves go, to stay eighteen months,—so that we shall have only five months with them out of two years and four months,—shall be practically two whole years separated from them. It's hard, very hard to bear the thought."[1]

"I went over to dine with the Fines, you know; and, although I was tired, I enjoyed myself very much indeed,—because it was a company of intimate friends: the McCormicks, the Finleys, the Magies. We made a very cosey, easy-going company, and I was rather less tired when the evening was over than when it began,—as much rested as I could have been at home *without you*."[2]

His friendships, however, precious as they were to him, never turned him aside when it came to the support of principles or policies he believed in—and therein lay some of the tragical problems of a later time. Whatever happened, he must support what he considered right, even if it alienated his friends. Sometimes, when he felt that his ardency in support of a cause might have hurt a friend, he could apologize for the method—never for the matter.

"After I left you this morning it came upon me that I had spoken rather brusquely about your reference to the honour system. I was thinking only of the *thing*, which lies very close to my heart, and did not consider *how* I spoke. Pray forgive the bluntness for the cause's sake."[3]

Wilson could also delight intensely in new people he met, men who had "substance," as he called it, women who had charm, and were "conversable." Whether talking himself—and he loved to talk—or listening to others, he enjoyed such contacts as much as anything in life:

"Mr. Page,[4] of the *Forum*, turned up here, but, as I

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[1] Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, March 11, 1900.

[2] *Ibid.*, April 7, 1901.

[3] Letter to Henry van Dyke, November 10, 1901.

[4] Walter H. Page.

Princeton, 10 Nov. '01

My dear vanDyke,

After I left you this morning it came upon me that I had spoken rather brusquely about your reference to the honour System. I was thinking only of the thing which lies very close to my heart, and did not consider how I spoke. Pray forgive the bluntness for the Cause's sake.

Sincerely Yours,
Woodrow Wilson

Letter of Woodrow Wilson to Dr. Henry van Dyke

did not see him alone, I do not know whether he had anything special to say to me or not. Dr. H. B. Adams, H. C. Adams (who is also lecturing here now), Page, and I dined together last evening at the University Club—and our party did not break up until nearly midnight. We had a *very* interesting and very jolly time. I feel that I know H. C. Adams and Page much better than I should have been able to know them within the same space of time under any other circumstances."[1]

Of another dinner he writes:

"There were four other ladies present, whose names, as usual, are to me 'as if they were not,' besides Mr. and Mrs. Babcock[2]—with both of whom I made fast progress in friendship, I think. She is full of sense and womanliness, and otherwise attractive, besides, with no mean claims to be called pretty. . . . Mr. Babcock and I capped each others' stories all through the dinner, keeping the table in a roar—and Mrs. Babcock listened to his stories almost as well as you listen to mine."[3]

And how excited he was when a new person, a brilliant talker, swam into his ken:

". . . I came to my room and spent half an hour steadying my nerves for the evening at the ——. I expected it to be an ordeal, so correct and dull are the good people. But Fortune was kind to me. Dr. Wood, of the German department of the University, and his wife were invited also. I knew Dr. Wood slightly and had heard several things that made me wish to know him better: and certainly he rewards the knowing. A better talker, of the sound, substantial sort, I never heard: human, withal, humorous, many-sided, Catholic: a man and a scholar every inch of him! Mrs. Wood, a sweet, bright woman,

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 1, 1894.

[2]The Reverend Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

[3]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 10–11, 1894.

speaking a quaint sweet English,—pure, idiomatic, yet not born with her: carefully conceived, deliberately uttered. Dr. Wood is a Massachusetts man who has been educated, mellowed, oriented by the world (of Europe and America); but Mrs. Wood is a German. . . . She pleased me immensely; but her husband delighted me, and seemed to string my mind to its right tone again: so that this morning I feel more like myself again."[1]

One of the remarkable aspects of Wilson's life was his friendships with women. Real friendship between men and women is so rare that most people cannot in the least understand it. In Wilson's life it played a very great part. Several such friendships, like that with the Misses Smith of New Orleans, Mrs. Reid[2] of Baltimore, and Mrs. Toy[3] of Boston, mostly begun during the years of the Princeton professorship, lasted with undimmed ardour to the end of his life. Other friendships, like that with Miss Ricketts and Mrs. Hibben of Princeton, were scarcely less devoted. The correspondence connected with most of these friendships is voluminous.

One of his daughters says that her father always liked brilliant women, enjoyed knowing them, enjoyed still more talking with them.[4] "Cultivated and conversable" was one of his tests, whether of a man or a woman. His letters to his wife contain many descriptions of his meetings with brilliant and interesting women:

"Before I left, Miss —— came in. Did I speak of her before, in telling of the meeting of the Archeological Club? I took her out to supper after the reading of the papers that evening and have seldom enjoyed any woman's talk

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 4, 1895.

[2]Mrs. Edith G. Reid, wife of Professor Harry Fielding Reid of Johns Hopkins University.

[3]Mrs. Nancy Toy, wife of Professor Crawford H. Toy of Harvard University.

[4]Mrs. Francis B. Sayre to the author.

more than I did hers: it was at once thoroughly intellectual and thoroughly feminine,—not so playful and amusing as Miss ——'s, but quite as spirited and valid. I find she has quite a reputation for remarkable parts, and she is also very attractive in person. I was very glad indeed, as you may imagine, to meet her again. . . ."[1]

"When I spoke to Mrs. —— the other evening about Col. Richard Malcolm Johnston, she said, 'Oh, you mean Mrs. ——'s Col. Johnston!' I think I shall become known here as 'Mrs. ——'s Mr. Wilson!' She takes me around and shows me off. She fairly put me through my paces . . . making me repeat 'what I said to her the other day about Andrew Lang,' etc. etc.! I felt quite like a prize horse at a fair! The descriptions she gives of you would lead you, if you could but hear them, to deem my praises dim and colourless by comparison. Her command of superlatives is beyond belief. I feel, after being with her, that I am stepping out of an *aurora borealis* into the common, unprismatic light."[2]

He was the guest of "the Babcocks" at Baltimore:

"No one could very well help enjoying such people as the Babcocks,—and I have begun to find out this time that Mrs. —— is one of the wittiest and most interesting women one can meet anywhere. I had a talk with her last night which was really delightful; the most interesting of the evening."[3]

He inherited, indeed, from his father, something of his delight in interesting women:

"Father seemed to enjoy himself very much indeed at Mrs. ——'s yesterday. We stayed till nearly five o'clock, with very delightful conversation,—as you may imagine:

[1] Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 19, 1894.
[2] *Ibid.*, February 23, 1894.
[3] *Ibid.*, February 3, 1895.

though father is inclined to object to Mrs. —— that she 'chatters' too much, and that, though she talks extremely well, it is *about nothing*,—in all of which there is, of course, a grain of truth. But who could mistake or resist her appreciation of those who *do* have something to say!"[1]

Mrs. Wilson encouraged these friendships—indeed they were often as much her friendships as his. She felt that she was often "too grave" or "too sober." "I am not gamesome," she quoted Cassius.

"She used frequently to say, 'Since he has married a wife who is not gay, I must provide for him friends who are.' She recognized the intellectual refreshment he had from clever women. . . . There was never a woman more large-minded, more lacking in petty jealousies."[2]

One of the most charming of these friendships was with Miss Lucy and Miss Mary Smith of New Orleans. It began in the summer of 1897 when the Wilson family was spending a vacation in the mountains of Virginia.[3] The Misses Smith were daughters of a Presbyterian minister who had been a classmate and great friend of Dr. Joseph R. Wilson. They were descendants of John Marshall. It seems to have been an instantaneous friendship on both sides, and although there was no blood relationship, it was not long before they were calling each other cousin—"Cousin Mary," "Cousin Lucy." They were both extremely lively minded women, full of fun, and with keen intellectual interests and enthusiasm. From that time onward, they visited the Wilsons nearly every year, often spending the vacations with them, and during the time that Wilson was Governor of New Jersey, occupying a part of the house in Princeton where the Wilson family

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 18, 1895.

[2]Miss Florence Hoyt to the author.

[3]At Colonel Stribling's home, Markham, Virginia.

lived. The friendship was most intimate and charming throughout, as the correspondence indicates. Here are characteristic letters:

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . You don't know how you have both taken hold on our hearts! Ellen begs (particularly since New Orleans doesn't now seem a good place to go to for some months to come) that you will not promise your Kentucky kinsfolk to come to them at the very first of October, but that you will generously give us the full time at first agreed upon, at least, and I cry a loud *Amen*. . . .

Yours with affectionate regard,
WOODROW WILSON.[1]

He writes the next year:

MY DEAR MISS LUCY,

What you want is a "sentiment," is it not? that can be "proposed" as a toast. How would this do:

To our Country: may her literary men do her honour by speaking the truth, of her and of all things; may they give her immortality by making the truth eloquent and beautiful.

It is a great pleasure to do *any*thing for you! I could not tell you how often or with what deep affection Ellen and I think and speak of you both,—or how eagerly we look forward to next summer's reunion. The summer of '97 was a lucky summer and made us rich with this new friendship, which now seems always to have been ours. The dear busy little woman has been meaning to write to one or both of you for some weeks, but seems always obliged to do something else, or to go at once to sleep when evening comes after the breathless day. You are generous, both of you, to write without reckoning exact exchanges of letters like exacting creditors, and we are *very much* in your debt because you write so much better letters than we do; but we do the best we can. . . .

Ellen and the children join me in a big message of love to you both, and I am, though writing as fast as I can,

Your devoted friend,
WOODROW WILSON.[2]

[1] September 15, 1897.

[2] December 8, 1898.

The letters, like those to his more intimate men friends, are full of comments upon books, politics, leaders, public questions.

With Mrs. Reid of Baltimore he corresponded much regarding his books. Here is a representative letter:

Princeton, 27 Jan'y, 1901

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday was a lucky, happy day for me. The postman, instead of bringing me business letters, brought me nothing but letters from friends, and I saw your handwriting again with a real delight. Since some perversity of fortune seems to deprive me even of such occasional glimpses of you as I might reasonably hope for, I wish my conscience could forget how selfish and essentially unreasonable it would be for me to propose a scheme of regular correspondence,—so that my pleasure might seem less hap-hazard and I might have always the zest of expectation to go before them! A conscience is a great nuisance! To know what you want and not to be able to get your own consent to ask for it! To know that your friends have something very much better and more important to do than to attend to your pleasure! These are the things which strengthen character, no doubt, but they are also the things which make life look a sort of bluish-gray. I *could* urge an unusual argument for indulging me in this case. Your letters, though never so short, always contain a delicious flavour of *yourself;* and it would be an invaluable thing to a literary fellow, seriously bent upon acquiring a real mastery in his art, to have abundant, various, and ever fresh material for studying that most illusive, and yet most central, question of the craft: how individuality is expressed. But of course I shall urge nothing of the kind,—nothing at all.

I need not tell you that there is a special bit of heartening for me in the sentence in which you speak your approval of the opening chapters of my History. This, you know, is neither the *full* history of the country I used to discuss with you (that was begun, and was written down to about 1688, on about treble the scale of this) nor the short sketch that I began for use as a school text-book. The text-book was cut off almost at its birth by the upset in the Harpers' business; and the

longer history has been (quite indefinitely) postponed for this middle-size creature which is no doubt of a more serviceable stature than either of the others. The particular features I wanted to make prominent in the writing began, I found, to be a good deal obscured,—and that inevitably, so far as I could see,—at any rate for a fellow of my degree of skill,—in use of the larger scale. As for the unfortunate school history, —that is another story, too involved and tedious and vexatious to be set down by a good natured chronicler.

The trip to Europe seems just now to be receding rather than drawing near. My dear father's health has within the last few weeks shown rather serious signs of breaking, and unless he shows some remarkable improvement within the next month or two we shall give the trip up for the present. He is in the south. I made a flying trip to see him last week. He is excellently well taken care of by a host of devoted friends where he is, is much better now than he was when his attacks first came on; and will return to us again when the winter relaxes; but I could not put the ocean between us unless matters mend materially. And so we may not go, after all. As for forgetting you when we do go, that were easier said than done. Some people attend to that matter themselves and avoid all risk of carelessness or shallowness on the part of their friends by taking pains to be of such quality that, once known, they *can't* be forgotten. They somehow manage it so that when once they have consented to be another's friend, "sure enough" as the children say, it makes that other's life once for all different and more delightful, and he does not forget unless he "scorns delight" and lives *oblivious* days.

I was keenly disappointed at missing Mr. Reid when he was here. It was peculiarly ill luck. I hurried around to van Dyke's as soon as I knew of it and could escape or curtail engagements, but it was too late. He had gone. Could he be dared to try it again? And his wife?

Mrs. Wilson sends warm love both to yourself and to Mrs. Gittings; I send mine to Mrs. Gittings, and our warmest regards to Mr. Reid; and am in all things

Your devoted friend,
WOODROW WILSON.

The correspondence with Mrs. Toy did not begin until much later and dealt more largely with public questions.

At the centre of Wilson's life, however, the moving influence in it, though never dominating its purposes or substantially changing its course, was Ellen Axson Wilson. He was astonishingly dependent upon her for sympathy. In order to do his best work, he had to live in an atmosphere of understanding. From the very beginning, before they were married, they had agreed to be absolutely honest with each other in everything. If anything was wrong with the health or the mental attitude of either, he or she was frank about it. Whenever there was illness or accident in the family, if one was away, there was never any attempt to conceal the truth, even to relieve anxiety. They shared their friends, their books, their pleasures, their ills. The reading of an immense accumulation of family letters, extending over a period of thirty years, reveals the remarkable fact that there is not an unkind or censorious word in any of them—not one. This does not mean that mistakes were not made, that there were not differences of opinion, but these were met with a courtesy and gentleness that could only have been prompted by the deepest affection. Mrs. Wilson's brother, Stockton Axson, an intimate of the family for many years, has said:

"We often hear it said of a married pair—so often that it has become a sort of 'bromide'—'A cross word never passed between that couple.' I have been honestly trying to think if I ever heard anything approaching an altercation between Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and I cannot recall even a shadow of such. And yet these were no weaklings; but two spirited people, each with a power of conviction possible only to very strong characters. They would sometimes differ in their opinions, but their relationship was so rooted in mutual love and loyalty that their differences were casual and superficial, never fundamental.

"I have seen Mr. Wilson humorously assume the rôle of a browbeaten and henpecked person, unallowed to hold an opinion, when his wife would say in her impetuous way, 'Woodrow, you know you don't think that!' and he would smile and say, 'Madam, I was venturing to think that I thought that until I was corrected.' At one time, when the girls were growing up, he used to laugh and quote Chief Justice Fuller, who remarked that his 'jurisdiction extended over all the United States except the Fuller family.' I have sometimes wondered how a family composed of varying and very positive elements ever contrived to live in such absolute and undisturbed harmony as did the Wilson family, and I have come to the conclusion that such a result can be attained only in one way, not by any prescription, or plan or domestic 'scheme' of action, but only by enthroning love supreme—that where love is always master, every day and every hour, there must be harmony."[1]

We do not, however, need the testimony of others, for the letters are full not only of evidences of his dependence upon his wife, but of his deep and continuing affection for her.

"Certain it is that your sweet courage and hopefulness, your calm-eyed love of beauty and of duty, have done me unspeakable service."[2]

"You are so *reliable*, whatever a fellow may want,—whether sense, or sensibility, or imagination, or mere joy and *fun!* To possess you is to possess all resources!"[3]

He can say of one of his greatest literary ambitions:

"At any rate, thoughts of you will animate me through every page. I shall write for you. . . . We must be partners in this, as in everything,—else I shall grow cold to the

[1]Professor Stockton Axson, "The Private Life of President Wilson."

[2]March 13, 1892.

[3]September 11, 1893.

marrow, and write without blood or life. . . . I am not a fellow to be imposed upon, madam, by superficial charms or a first impression. Very few people, alas! wear well with me; but your charm deepens with every year. . . ."[1]

When she is away he writes every day, the eager letters of a lover:

"I want you to sit down before the mirror, if you can find time and place in that disordered house, and describe your appearance for me. Are your cheeks rosy? Are there lines of fatigue about your eyes, or do they shine clear and fresh? Do you look plump or is much travelling and much nursing and much managing making you look thin,—pulled down? Are the lines of your cheeks rounded or straight, dragging a little?"[2]

"When you go to church (the to-morrow after you get this letter) can't you sit near where you sat that first time I saw you—it was about where uncle James Bones's pew used to be—and (will it be wrong in church?) think of me, of all the sweet things that that first glimpse of you made possible for both of us. . . . Forget all the suffering and hard work and anxiety, and think only of that wh. has illuminated and beautified everything, our perfect love for each other. Have you gone any of the ways we went walking, or any of the ways we went driving, together—and have they recalled anything? . . . By the way, I've been reading Herrick, and here's a little poem, entitled 'Of Love. A Sonnet', which comes so near my present mood and meaning in one or two particulars that I must quote it:

> How love came in I do not know,
> Whether by the eye or ear, or no;
> Or whether with the soul it came
> (At first) infused with the same;

[1] February 25, 1900.
[2] March 26, 1892.

Whether in part 'tis here or there,
Or, like the soul, whole everywhere,
This troubles me: but I as well
As any other this can tell:
That when from hence she does depart
The outlet then is from the heart.

Though, if I were *looking* for a poem to express both what I felt when I first saw you and what all our subsequent life has shown me of yourself and of the sweet things of love, I should adopt Wordsworth's 'She was a phantom of delight', line for line, word for word, dropping not a syllable, except to fit the colour of your hair! That poem almost perfectly expresses both my mind's and my heart's judgments of you. . . ."[1]

A few weeks later he writes:

"What a relief it is to turn away from the Supreme Court Reports, over which I have been toiling all morning, to you. . . . I've found some lines of a song in Shakspere that almost exactly fit this double mood:

"Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
Through the transparent bosom of the deep,
As doth thy face through tears of mine give light:
Thou shinest in every tear that I do weep;
No drop but as a coach doth carry thee."[2]

When he is in Colorado lecturing in 1894, he says:

"It is so *dull* to be away from you. Life is so much more *commonplace* without you. That is one of the depressing and degrading things you have saved me from: a commonplace life. It is so fresh and sweet and interesting where you are."[3]

"How exciting it is to be writing my last letter before

[1]March 31, 1892.
[2]April 16, 1892.
[3]August 2, 1894.

starting for home! . . . You are the centre of my life, and I seem to lose force in direct proportion to my distance from you."[1]

In 1900, when Mrs. Wilson is visiting the Misses Smith in New Orleans, her husband writes from Princeton:

"Do you remember that passage in Stevenson's *Letters:* 'I vote for separations; F.'s arrival here, after our separation, was better fun for me than being married was by far. A separation completed is a most valuable property; worth piles.' Ah, that's it, 'a separation *completed*',—and when *this* one is completed it will be 'a most valuable property' indeed!"[2]

And Mrs. Wilson's letters, while far calmer, are likewise full of the deepest affection.

"How do you expect me to keep my head, you dear thing, when you send me such letters as you have done recently—when you lavish upon me such delicious praise? Surely there was never such a lover before, and even after all these years it seems almost too good to be true that you are *my* lover. All I can say in return is that I love you as you deserve to be loved,—as much as you can possibly *want* to be loved."[3]

Such was the intimate family and social life of the Princeton professor. His intellectual life, the steady growth of his convictions, his passion for improving the world he lived in, were things apart.

IX. DISCOVERING AMERICA

One aspect of Wilson's life during the Princeton professorship, and continuing on into the Princeton presidency, was the constant and widening effort he made to become better acquainted with America—actual America,

[1]August 4, 1894.

[2]February 11, 1900.

[3]Ellen Axson Wilson to Woodrow Wilson, August 27, 1902.

not merely the America of the books. He knew well the temptation of the college man to settle down into "academic darkness and ease." It was not enough to teach youth, not enough to write books—and he was active enough in both fields to have tested the energies of any two men—he must also know the people, know the country. He needed it to keep his political perceptions clear and his judgments sound.

His gift as a lecturer was the vehicle for the accomplishment of these ends. The constant training and self-discipline of the earlier years in the arts of oratory began now to add vastly to his distinction and his success. He was in demand for all sorts of occasions, dinners of alumni, academic ceremonials, and after-dinner speeches, for which he had the happiest gifts.[1] No one could present a candidate for a collegiate degree with a finer sense of the occasion than he. There was never a flaw in his taste.

But here, as in every other field he entered, victory, success, only made him the more avid for wider achievement. He began to make longer excursions, and to speak to popular as contrasted with academic audiences.

There are two sorts of leaders in a democracy, those who make a powerful impression upon the ablest men of their time; and those who captivate the crowd. In the beginning of his career, Wilson was of the first; Bryan was always of the second. Wilson began with the support of quite the most fastidious groups in America—the Boston brahmans were always for him—and came in time to enthrall the common people of the world. Wilson learned much of Bryan's art, Bryan nothing of Wilson's. Long before Wilson ever made a political speech—in the commonly accepted sense—he was attaining that mastery of discourse, that

[1] For excellent examples of his gifts as an after-dinner speaker, see his speech at the annual dinner of the New England Society in Brooklyn, New York, on December 21, 1896, and his speech before the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick on March 17, 1909.

power of adaptation to any kind of American audience, which was to serve him so well in later years.

As early as 1893, he was called to Chicago to speak at the World's Fair[1]—his first trip west of Ohio—and he visited Madison, Wisconsin, on the same journey. His address caused no small reverberation in the educational world.

The next year he made two notable voyages of discovery, one to the extreme East, a convention at Plymouth, Massachusetts, the stronghold of puritanism, and one to Colorado, where he had amusing and vivid glimpses of the West. His comments upon these journeys and upon the people he met will be found interpretive:

"July 13, 1894. I arrived here all right last night, after a most tedious but not unamusing journey. How diverting New England is—and how unlike the United States! I have a comfortable room, looking right out on the water: the 'historic spot' is right under my eyes, and is most interesting. This morning, 10:40 to 11:40, I delivered my first lecture, with some confidence, and with sufficient success: *that* is over! . . .

"July 14, 1894. . . . I have found some old acquaintances here—and of course made a few new ones: but it is emphatically a New England crowd, and very hard to feel at home with. The lecture audience is most interesting —full of faces that it is a pleasure to dwell upon,—so full are they of the records of character and thought. The majority are women; but not a large majority: there are also many men (the total number of the audience being, probably, about 110). The women's faces are, on the whole, the more interesting: at any rate, there are more interesting faces among the women than among the men. I feel sure, as I look at the audience, that the average

[1]The first cartoon of Woodrow Wilson was published at this time in a Chicago newspaper.

of intelligence among them is perhaps higher than in any other audience I ever spoke to—at least the sort of *prepared* intelligence needed for such lectures as they have gathered to hear—and of course that is very inspiring."[1]

The gathering at Plymouth was of a group of Ethical Culturists led by Felix Adler, and one of the chief addresses was by Professor Bosanquet on "Plato." It was here that Wilson first met Professor and Mrs. Crawford H. Toy of Harvard, who were to become his lifelong friends.

It was, in short, as intellectual a group of people, probably, as could be anywhere gathered together in America. He so captivated his audience that he made a lasting impression upon many of those who heard him.

A week later he was in Colorado Springs, as different in every way from Plymouth as could well be imagined, but Wilson was equally successful with his audiences.

"July 23, 1894. . . . As I sit, I have only to lift my eyes to look up to Pike's Peak and these singular mountains. I cannot describe this country yet; it is too unlike anything I ever saw before—and too unlike what I expected to see. Neither my impressions nor my vocabulary have adjusted themselves. I am both disappointed and strangely impressed. I am more than a mile higher than you are (6,000 ft.) and the peak in front of me is some 9,000 ft. higher still; and I breathe an air very different from any I ever breathed before: one seems to have to breathe *a little more*. . . .

"July 24, 1894. The first lecture of the course was delivered last night to an audience of about sixty persons, who seemed to enjoy it as much as so small an audience could. The attendance on the School, it seems, is smaller than was expected, on account of the interruption of travel occasioned by the strikes—and the people of the

[1]Letters to Ellen Axson Wilson.

'Springs' do not affect lectures of the serious kind. I have received an invitation from a lady representing 'about two hundred women of Denver, representing those most prominent in art, literature, politics, and society', to deliver 'one or more' of my lectures in that city. I don't know whether to accept or not. Women, you know, have the franchise in this State, and I am a bit shy of figuring 'under the auspices' of this Club. . . .

"July 25, 1894. . . . My first lecture has been so much talked about and has received so much praise that I am made the more nervous about the second one to-night. It will probably be more numerously attended, a good deal; may it meet expectations! . . .

"July 26, 1894. . . . This morning Hattie[1] and I took a drive through the Garden of the Gods: which, I must say, is most appropriately named. A more beautiful and extraordinary place I never saw. . . .

"July 29, 1894. Here I am on my way back from Glenwood Springs, and I must try to write you a line or two on the cars, to be mailed at the first opportunity. I had a glorious ride yesterday, thr. extraordinary gorges and amidst the most stupendous scenery I ever imagined—how I did wish for you! To-day the scenery is equally grand (I am returning by a different route) but scarcely so extraordinary. I am perfectly well—excited with new emotions—gradually filling up with new ideas and realization of our continent. . . .

"July 30, 1894. . . . What an eye-opener this extraordinary region is! I shall not miss the Alps so much hereafter.

"I go to Denver to-morrow, to lecture in the evening on 'Liberty' to a woman's club there. I am to be entertained by the President of the Club—worse luck!—and it is quite possible I shall be cut out of writing my letter; but

[1]Harriet Woodrow Welles, his cousin.

I will *try* not to be. I don't know *how much* they mean to entertain me. I can't imagine why I consent to do this sort of thing—and for nothing, too;—but such is your husband —hungry—*too* hungry—for reputation and influence. . . .

"August 1, 1894. . . . Mrs. Platt, with whom I stayed in Denver, the President of the Women's Club, is a very intelligent and agreeable woman indeed; her house is elegant, and her hospitality most cordial and home-like; and I enjoyed myself as much as I can among strangers. The whole afternoon was consumed in finishing lunch and driving round and about the city. It is a really beautiful place, full of the most elegant residences. It gives one a singular impression, however. It seems a sort of museum or experiment ground in all the modern styles of dwelling architecture. Every style that architects have conceived since 1879 is here to be seen within the compass of a few city blocks. You seem to be in a sort of architectural exhibit, such as the World's Fair might have contained, had there been space and means enough.

"In the evening came the lecture, 'before a small but select audience' (25¢ admission) in Unity Church. Enter to the platform two ladies followed modestly by the lecturer of the evening. He is introduced in a few laboriously chosen words by one of the ladies, a sweet and delicate looking person; he rises and bows to her deferentially; begins his lecture as collectedly as may be under the circumstances; and she and her companion withdraw to the front pew. The lecture is on Political Liberty; it is soon concluded; the lecturer holds a levee at the foot of the pulpit; is then carried off to 'the Club' by two Princeton men; and gets back to Mrs. Platt's about eleven a very tired man. That's the Denver visit. . . .

"August 2, 1894. . . . I am rejoiced to say that I not only keep my audience here, but draw new people at every lecture, till now I have quite a 'following.' One man ex-

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STOCKTON AXSON

WOODROW WILSON'S BROTHER-IN-LAW AND DEVOTED FRIEND

pressed his enthusiasm by exclaiming 'Why, that fellow is a whole team *and the dog under the wagon!*'. . . .

"August 4, 1894. . . . I have certainly been most cordially received by all sorts of people here; and I think I *must* say that I have considerably advanced my reputation by coming here. My lectures have drawn increasing audiences of the best quality; they have been the feature of the Summer School; and the enthusiastic comments upon them compel even me to pronounce them an unqualified success. *You* know how much that is for me to say. . . ."[1]

The Western trip was a vivid experience. The mere size of the country impressed him strongly. He remarked on his astonishment when they told him in Colorado that, after all the travelling he had done, he was not two thirds of the way across the continent. He brought back a bag full of polished mineral specimens and talked enthusiastically of the geological colour of the region. And like most Easterners of those far-off days on their first journey to the West, he was impressed by Eastern provincialism.

It was such trips as these—hard trips—that contributed to his breakdowns in 1896 and 1899, but he did not give them over. We find him speaking to numerous and varied audiences at Washington, Richmond, Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere, always widening his acquaintanceships, extending his influence. He had the power of making a vivid, indeed unforgettable, impression upon many of the people who heard him.

"I heard Woodrow Wilson the other night. He is putting truth and Christianity in politics. It was a great talk. His subject—it doesn't matter which it was; he would give the same message under any subject. One thing impressed me much: He said he always thought that the best text for such a talk would be in the systematic writers on

[1]Letters to Ellen Axson Wilson.

politics and economics, but when he became 'systematic' himself he found his mistake, because, said he, 'when you begin to be systematic, then you begin to depart from eternal verities—for—eternal verities *are not systematic*.' 'So,' said he, 'I found my text in the poets, who always come nearer real truth.'"[1]

In later years, when he came, quite unknown to the politicians, into public life, people who had heard him and had come to believe in the man and his message, were to rise up all over the country, eager supporters of his candidacies, ready nuclei for organization.

[1]Burton Alva Konkle to the author—a quotation from his diary written at the time.

CHAPTER XIII

TRAVELS IN EUROPE

A man after he has travelled over this country and seen his fellow citizens in distant parts of the continent is ashamed of himself for having been so narrow a creature before he travelled, for having thought such ignorant thoughts and such superior thoughts about his fellow citizens. The best dose for the man who would be a thinking man is to see the people he is thinking about. . . .

Address before the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, October 13, 1899.

Nothing in means of travel, in the manners and resources of the countries he visited, or in the remarks of the people he met upon practical matters escaped him.

"Leaders of Men," address delivered at Princeton, January 20, 1898.

The best way to learn things is by direct contact.

Address before the Lincoln Association at Trenton, February 12, 1902.

I. FIRST TRIP ABROAD, 1896

WILSON made his first two trips to Europe during the period of the Princeton professorship, one in 1896, the other in 1899. In both cases he had broken down physically from overwork and a complete change was necessary. In both cases he travelled on slow but comfortable steamships and visited only in England and Scotland. He had always been a profound admirer of the English people. No studies had delighted him as keenly as those in English history and politics. Many of his heroes were English—Burke and Bagehot foremost of all—and his literary admirations centred upon English writers. Wordsworth was the poet he most admired: his devotion

to Shelley and Keats reached back to the ardent days of his studenthood. He became so enamoured of the lake country that all of his subsequent visits to Europe, with the exception of a single short trip with Mrs. Wilson to France and Italy in 1903, drew him back irresistibly to Rydal and Keswick and Grasmere.

The two journeys of 1896 and 1899, when every impression was fresh and keen, were the most interesting; and it is fortunate that he left, in letters to his family, a vivid account of them. Nothing that he ever wrote admits the reader more completely into the soul of the man than this informal narrative written from day to day during his travels. Here we may discover his truest interests, his deepest enthusiasms: here we may trace his thinking upon various subjects of importance in his later career. Such carefree visits released the poet and prophet in him.

Wilson sailed on his first trip on the *Ethiopia* to Glasgow in June, 1896. He was in miserable health, with his right arm and hand so crippled that he could not write. He began at once to practise with his left hand, and all the letters written during the trip are in a quite unfamiliar script.

It was characteristic of him that he should make a number of warm friends on the voyage, among them Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Woods of South Carolina, whom he greatly enjoyed. They were so delighted with one another that they made part of the journey in England together. Judge Woods said of it many years later:

". . . Mr. Wilson was only a college professor and I a country lawyer; we found much in common and had a great deal of pleasure speculating in a humorous way as to our future careers. We parted with the understanding that when he became President, I should be appointed a Judge."[1]

[1]Mrs. C. A. Woods to the author.

And so indeed it happened; when Wilson became President, he appointed his friend to a judgeship.

"June 9, 1896. [On the S. S. *Ethiopia*.]

"This has proved an exceptionally slow and tedious voyage,—12 days instead of 10. . . . I have fared famously, with only a very few qualms; and have found some delightful companions. . . .

"There are so few conveniences for writing, or for any sort of privacy, that I have not practised this useless left hand at all. It is already tired out. . . .

"June 13, 1896 [At the Clarendon Hotel, Edinburgh.] . . .

"We came over to Edinburgh this morning, and have been doing the castle and Holyrood palace to-day. My friends are Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Woods of Marion, S. C., people whose kindliness, simplicity, and quiet way of being cultivated would delight you (he is a lawyer of local eminence), and Mr. Jno. McSween, a merchant of Timmonsville, S. C., who is of their party,—a sturdy Scotsman who went to Am. 28 years ago in the steerage, has prospered, and makes up in Presbyterian character what he lacks in culture. They are to do England on their bicycles, and I am hoping to be a good deal with them. They mean to go slowly, as I do. . . .

"Sunday, the 14th. This morning we went to St. Giles's for the 9:30 service, saw the Highland regiment march down from the castle and file in, and heard a most interesting sermon in the noble pile. After that, Mr. Woods and I made a pious pilgrimage to the tomb of Adam Smith in the yard of the Canongate church and to the churchyard of the Greyfriars. . . ."[1]

One of the things he had in mind when he sailed for Europe was to make just such "pious pilgrimages" to the homes or the burial-places of several of the men whose

[1]Letters to Ellen Axson Wilson. The following quotations in this chapter, unless otherwise noted, are taken from Mr. Wilson's letters to his wife.

memories he revered. A day or two later, he sends Mrs. Wilson some leaves of grass from Adam Smith's grave.

He has also a few academic duties to perform: he attends the Kelvin Jubilee in Glasgow and then goes to Cambridge to call on Professor Maitland.

"The town [Cambridge] seemed to me rather mean, but the colleges most of them beyond measure attractive, —some of them exceedingly beautiful."[1]

"June 21, 1896. [At the Grand Hotel, Glasgow.] . . .

"I enjoyed the flying trip to Cambridge very much. . . . My arm suffers scarcely a twinge, and is a most promising patient. . . . I wish I could think of you less,—or else write of you more! It takes me half an hour to one of these pages. But that's not quite as bad as before,—and the writing looks a trifle better,—don't it? . . .

"June 23, 1896. [At the Grand Hotel, Glasgow.]

"We have made the delightful run through the lochs and the Trossachs, and start out in fine spirits on our wheels at last, to-morrow morning (Wednesday). Mr. and Mrs. Woods wear extremely well, and are ideal companions under the circumstances. He is, if anything, less strong than I am, and wants to travel by as easy stages as I do; they have practically let me determine the line of travel; and they are gentle and accommodating. What more could I say? . . .

"June 26, 1896. [At the King's Arms Hotel, Dumfries.]

"Here we are at the end of the third day of our bicycle tour. The first day we went from Glasgow to Ayr (33 miles), over excellent roads; the second day we started late and made only seventeen miles, partly because we turned aside to see the cottage in which Burns was born, 'auld Alloway kirk,' and 'auld Alloway brig' over which Tam O'Shanter rode. . . .

"June 28, 1896. [At the Great Central Hotel, Carlisle.]. . .

[1] June 19, 1896.

"We have made one hundred and twenty miles, and are taking our Sunday rest. It is astonishing with how little fatigue the thing can be done on these roads; and it is quite as exhilarating and entertaining as I expected. The sweet, quiet country, the hawthorn hedge-rows, the quaint roadside villages, the great gates of estates with their pretty lodges, the goodnatured, friendly people,—in Scotland (we have had only 8 miles of England as yet) the green slopes of the great hills,—all combine to make a great overmastering charm which itself makes the wheel run easily and with zest, as if to hurry from beauty to beauty.

"I have had a considerable disappointment here. I cannot, after the most diligent enquiry, find out anything about grandfather's residence here, not even which church he was pastor of. I planned to spend Sunday here for the express purpose of attending the church he had, and of seeing, if possible, the house in which dear mother was born,—but I have seen and learned nothing. . . .

"June 29, 1896. [At the Queen's Hotel, Ambleside.]

"I must write you a little letter from this Wordsworth country (the tiny flower enclosed I plucked from a wall near Wordsworth's cottage at Rydal Mount.). Mr. Woods' wheel broke down last week, and . . . I came on alone, therefore, this morning to Keswick by train, and from K. rode on my wheel the 16 enchanting miles to this place, by Thirlmere, Grasmere, and Rydal Water. . . . I shall go back a few miles on the road I came to-day, to identify some places I missed,—Hartley Coleridge's 'Nab Cottage,' Dr. Arnold's 'Foxe How,' and Grasmere village, with its church and Wordsworth's grave, lying aside from the road. I declare I hardly have the heart to tell you of being in these places, knowing how you will yearn when you read of them, and how much better *right* you have to see them than I have. . . . One who knew nothing of the

memories and the poems associated with these places might well bless the fortune that brought him to a region so complete, so various, so romantic, so irresistible in its beauty,—where the very houses seem suggested by Nature and built to add to her charm. I shall be haunted, and perpetually *hurt* by it all till I get *you* here,—and how shall we ever get away again when I do?

"I am perfectly well, and would be perfectly happy if only you were here! . . .

"July 5, 1896. [At the Woolpack Hotel, Warwick.]

"Here I am writing . . . by candle light in a quaint inn at the heart of the Shakspere country. My heart burns with a keen remorse that I should be here without you,—in this inexpressibly beautiful region, where England is to be seen looking as I had dreamed it would look, and where memories crowd and haunt so as to fill the mind and heart to overflowing. . . . We have just come. We have seen nothing *but* the country, a glimpse of the ruins of Kenilworth, and one tower of the castle here; but the impression made by this exquisite land, after the comparatively bleak and arid north, is itself reward and joy enough, were there nothing else. Ah, how I wish I could write! Until now I have been homesick for *America*. . . ."

It was at Oxford, however, that he reached the pinnacle of his adventure. There is no doubt that the inspiration he had here among the quads of Oxford was in part responsible for his vision of a reconstructed Princeton.

"July 9, 1896. [At the Wilberforce Hotel, Oxford.]

"We 'lay' last night in Woodstock, partly for the name of it, partly because we wanted to sleep at a quiet country inn, partly because it was on our road and we were too tired to go the remaining 8 miles to Oxford. We reached here about lunch time to-day, and have had only the afternoon to look about us, but, dear me, a mere glance at Oxford is enough to take one's heart by storm. It's true

we went at once to Magdalen, the most beautiful of the colleges, but we saw within the quads of others too, and it is what nature as well as art has done for the incomparable place that has taken us captive. I have seen as much that made me feel alien as that made me feel at home since I came to England, and have been made on the whole to love Am. more rather than less,—for all Eng. is so bonny and so full of treasure for the mind and fancy,—but Oxford! Well, I am afraid that if there were a place for me here Am. would see me again only to sell the house and fetch you and the children,—and yet I have not seen a prettier dwelling than ours in Eng!

"I am still in excellent shape . . . stomach, arm, and all. My friends say they never saw anyone improve more in appearance within the same space of time than I have improved since they first met me on the steamer. It may be partly the colour the sun has given me, but it's not all that. . . .

"July 13, 1896. [At the Market Hotel, Winchester.] . . .

"It was hard to leave Oxford: its fascination is extraordinary; but I can go back if I wish, after I have looked up Mr. Bryce in London and plied him again with the invitation to lecture for us next October. . . .

"July 16, 1896. [At the Covent Garden Hotel, London.]

"Here I am in London, and I'm not a bit glad to get here, so thoroughly do I hate a big city. But of course I felt that I must see the place. . . . I shall ride about the city on the tops of 'buses,' to get the 'look' of the huge thing, but shall see as few specific objects as possible, besides the abbey, the Museum, the National Gallery, and the House of Commons. . . .

"July 20, 1896. [At the Covent Garden Hotel, London.]

"Now I feel guilty indeed: I have been long in the National Gallery, and all the while with the feeling strong upon me to sadness that the Rembrandts, Rubenses,

Reynoldses, Gainsboroughs, Turners, Titians, and the rest that I was seeing *belonged to you*, and that I was a selfish thief to take sight of them without you. . . .

"I have not looked up many specific things in London yet. You know how poor a hand I am at systematic sight seeing,—how I hate it, and how it tires me. But I have gotten a very vivid impression of London externally, have realized it, and felt its singular charm. . . ."

He has visited the shrine of Adam Smith: he is now on his way to the burial-place of Burke:

"July 26, 1896. [At the Rose and Crown Inn, Tring.] . . .

"I reached Beaconsfield yesterday forenoon, and was not long in finding what I was in search of. Burke is buried in the church, and with him not only his son and his wife (who survived him more than twenty years) but also his brother Richard. There is a simple, a very simple, tablet in the wall of the plain church, recording the fact of burial without comment or sentiment,—that is all. In the churchyard stands a somewhat elaborate monument to the poet Waller. The local policeman of the quaint village pointed that out readily enough, but did not know where Burke was buried. . . .

"I do not find any distinct traces of the Washingtons; but I did not expect to. I only wanted to get the look of the country into my mind's eye; and certainly it was worth seeing. It ought surely to have bred a poet. Just here it is as beautiful as Warwickshire. . . ."

He gets distant echoes of the hot political campaign in America—McKinley and Bryan—and expresses his feeling regarding Bryan as the Democratic leader:

"Really, you know, you are having a most extraordinary presidential campaign in that odd country of yours! I shall have to be told where I am when I get back. It looks as if *I* would have to vote for *McKinley!* Oh Lord, how long! . . ."

He rides onward through Chester into Wales and thus " to Gloucester.

August 8, 1896. [At Fowler's Hotel, Gloucester.] . . .

"I've been wishing ever since I landed on this side that I had brought that tiny volume of Wordsworth with me; and the other day,—yesterday, in fact, at Tewkesbury,—I saw almost exactly the same collection for sale for a shilling, bought it, and have had a perfect feast out of it. I seemed never to have read any of it before, so keenly did it strike upon my palate. Its possession has been a real boon to me, and I shall carry it in my jacket the rest of the journey as I did to-day. Gloucester is not more than twenty miles away from Tintern Abbey, I think, and I have quite made up my mind to make a pilgrimage to the region where the 'Lines' were written. . . .

"Yesterday I rode for nearly twenty miles beside the Wye, and of all the parts of England I have seen it has most won my heart. It is so glad a stream and has so exquisite a secluded path amongst the hills that seem made for its setting

> "how oft—
> In darkness, and amid the many shapes
> Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
> Shall hang upon the beatings of my heart,
> How oft, in spirit, shall I turn to thee,
> O sylvan Wye!

I read the whole poem sitting on the bank of the stream and was filled with an exalted emotion I don't think I can ever forget. The poem contains, in a degree I had never dreamed of the very spirit of the place!

"This morning I rode over the Mendip Hills to this heart of Somerset, coming down into it from a height whence I could see it in all its beauty, lying in a sort of

golden mist with its exquisite cathedral, like a jewel, in the midst. . . ."

He is now headed for the home of Bagehot.

"August 12–17, 1896. [At Langport, Somerset.]

"Langport is the place where Bagehot was born and lived; his grave is in the churchyard here, and in the church there is a beautiful memorial window to him, put in by his wife, who still lives at the family place (Herds Hill) here when she is not in London. Almost the first sign that caught my eye when I rode into Wells was 'Stuckey's Banking Co.', and it at once occurred to me to ask how far off Langport was. I found it was only some 18 miles away, and Glastonbury on the same road. I saw Glastonbury this morning, and came on here this afternoon. It is a quaint, interesting little place. The churchyard lies upon a hill from which, standing at Bagehot's grave, one looks out upon just such a view as that from Prospect Ave,—only more beautiful, with a sweet river running through it, and a wonderful golden light lying on it, as, it would seem, on the whole of Somerset. The leaf enclosed is from Bagehot's grave, darling; please press it and keep it for me. . . .

"I have just come from afternoon service in the great minster here, [Lincoln] and a tour of inspection around it afterwards; and it is very beautiful,—in some respects surpassingly fine; but Wells won my heart above all the rest, and keeps it still,—not because it is a more perfect jewel than the others, but because its perfect setting (almost all the ancient ecclesiastical buildings grouped about it unruined, and the quiet town keeping silence about it) make it seem greater and more admirable. Glastonbury too, King Arthur's Isle of Avalon,

> 'Where falls not hail, nor rain, nor any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
> Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
> And bowery meadows, crowned with summer sun,'

took my fancy greatly; but its glories are gone to decay and melancholy ruin, while Wells seems to retain her antiquity *alive*. Canterbury disappointed me. Its associations, of course, give it a greatness and majesty which move the imagination very deeply; but it has not now either the beauty or the charm of half a dozen others. . . ."

From Lincoln he rode on to Chesterfield, visited the cathedrals at York and Durham, and rode the length of the Yarrow before sailing for home in August.

Besides the great joy the trip gave him—a "restoration of the soul"—he returned much improved in health and with a deepening of purpose, the change of attitude already referred to. To a friend who questioned him upon his return, "Well, what did you think of England?" he replied: "I am a better American for having been there."[2]

II. WITH AXSON IN 1899

Wilson's next trip to England was made in 1899, this time with his brother-in-law and devoted friend, Stockton Axson. He had looked forward eagerly to a return to the scenes which he had enjoyed so greatly in 1896. He was again sorely in need of rest, though he left America only under protest, saying in one of his letters to his wife:

"You and Mrs. Hibben conspired to make me think I *needed* this elaborate self-indulgence; I weakly allowed myself to be deceived; and now I am heartily and frankly ashamed of myself. There was nothing in the world the matter with me that could not have been rested out of me *any*where except, perhaps, at Princeton itself. Princeton, no doubt, would have been too full of college thoughts and regrets to afford me either rest of a good kind or recreation that would have reached my mind. . . . Here I am simply spending money, and pining for you!"[3]

They sailed[1] on the Anchor Line ship *Furnessia*—from New York to Glasgow—travelling as cheaply as possible, but quite comfortably. The ship broke a shaft in midocean and arrived a day or so late. They had a very jolly party on the boat, made up of Professor Seth of Cornell, Le Fevre who had been a student under Professor Seth, and Meiklejohn, afterward president of Amherst College. The discussions were exceedingly lively and interesting.[2]

"June 25, 1899. [On the S. S. *Furnessia*.] . . .

"Tell 'Jack' and Mrs. Hibben that the party of professors, instead of proving bores, have proved a perfect Godsend, of course. Our fellow passengers are for the most part a painfully commonplace lot (it was so before *going over*) and these men are jolly, informal, altogether companionable and comforting. My only objection to Professor Seth is that he does not talk—he listens. He is most appreciative, likes a joke, knows a good story when he hears it, smokes, and absorbs,—but will not talk. I am sure, by every sign, that he has lots in him, but he keeps it to himself, apparently only because of the amiable qualities of modesty and sympathy which make him a good listener. . . .

"June 27, 1899. [On board the S. S. *Furnessia*.] . . .

"I wonder if *we* could not manage Peter Ibbetson's transmigration in our dreams and actually join one another? Do you remember the directions? (I have just read the book). Lie on your back, your hands clasped under your head, your feet crossed, the right over the left. Don't lose your sense of your actual place and identity, but at the same time fix your will upon some past time and place where you want to be. Remember that *I* can't join you until five hours after your time. What nonsense! And yet the book seems so real, and has given me such an

[1]June 17, 1899.

[2]Professor Stockton Axson to the author. Much of the material in this chapter was given to the author by Dr. Axson.

intolerable longing to join you after that delightful fashion. No doubt Miss Lucy Smith could manage it! . . ."

From Glasgow they went to Edinburgh, where the first Sunday they heard Hugh Black preach. Wilson was enthusiastic about the service and also about the company of Gordon Highlanders which attended that day. He referred to them for years afterward. During the Boer War, he was certain that he could pick out the pictures from illustrations in the *Illustrated London News*, of some of the same men who had been killed in action. Wilson says of the experience:

"I climbed to church this morning by an endless flight of stone steps which begin to rise just by the inn door. It's impressive, I can tell you, to sit at service beside a highland regiment (the Gordon Highlanders, no less); and I can vouch for it, if this morning's sermon be a typical example, that the Gospel is preached to them with simplicity and honest force. The sermon seemed to me to strike home. Certainly I felt the force of it myself. I could not sing though I knew the hymns. It moved me so to hear the old hymns sung to the old tunes under such surroundings that I had no voice to sing with. Assuredly my mother's blood is strong in me, and is strangely stirred in this land which gave her her breeding!"

From Edinburgh they worked their way westward again by train and bicycle through the Trossachs back to Glasgow, then down through the Burns country. Wilson liked the Burns country much better than the Shakespeare country. He thought it less overrun with tourists.

"July 7, 1899. [At Dumfries.] Here we are in another part of the 'Burns country,' still hero-worshipping, and still seeing things I never saw before. We went to the depths of a narrow court to the Globe Inn, the quaint little tavern which Burns most frequented here, and in a delightful little low-ceiling'd room, just such as one's

imagination would have promised, with the original wainscoting and fireplace, saw the table about which the poet and his cronies used to gather, and the chair in which he used to sit and hold forth for their delectation. One Axson could at first hardly be induced to sit in the chair, but sat gazing at it with eyes big with deepest reverence,—such delectable things am I seeing! But at last he was persuaded, and sat there for a moment or two with a face full as a child's of wondering emotion. The room has several other chairs left of its 'original' furniture. In another room is a window on whose panes Burns scratched some verses; but it is a bedroom and we were told, apologetically, that we could not see it: it was let to a guest. We have seen nothing yet so genuinely *like* an original as that delicious inn. We saw the outside of the house Burns lived in during most of his residence here, and both the outside and the inside of the house he spent the last years in and died in; and we saw his tomb in St. Michael's churchyard hard by the latter. Here his customary ill luck has followed him and his grave is covered with a Greek mausoleum—this least Greek of our poets! Taste seemed to leave this island with the going out of the Tudors.

"This afternoon we did something else out of the usual. We mounted our wheels and after not a little casting about over this beautiful country-side found, six miles away, the farm, 'Ellisland', where Burns lived on first coming to this neighbourhood, and where he wrote Highland Mary and Tam O'Shanter. The house and barns and sheds are almost exactly as he built and left them; the farmyard enclosure is the same: and all lie away from the main road, out of sight, embowered in their own grove of trees, upon the very bank of the broad and quiet Nith, running with a pleasant noise at the door, sweet walks open on its sloping banks. As ideal a little group of humble, homelike buildings as one's fancy could wish. Stock fortunately

remembered how Burns fell silent and abstracted one winter's evening (the anniversary of Mary's death), and left the house to fling himself on the hay-rick and fashion his verses to the highland lass, and how Jean followed him to warn him against the cold. He remembered, too, how she followed him by the river's bank, saw him gesticulate and heard him laugh aloud as the verses of Tam O'Shanter sprang into his thought. It was all intensely real, as we stood there in that secluded place and looked upon the unchanged scene where these things happened, and genius worked at its craft and mystery. It was a fifteen mile ride in all, the way we went, but it paid: the fine air exhilarated us and the thoughts that crowded in upon us as we looked were their own reward. There is a pang in it all for me. All these things bring *you* into my thought with painful vividness, and I know to the full what it is to be separated from you. You know so much more than either of us about these things that we remember little scraps about; you could enjoy them so much more keenly, and as if in their own spirit; above all, I am myself a man who labours at thinking and conceiving and such scenes of another man's living and striving and loving make me know the part you play in my life,—how much I depend on you for sympathy and inspiration. . . ."

They visited Carlisle again, and then rode down into the Lake District, which Wilson came to love more than any other part of the British isles. He comments on the English people:

"This little inn is very humble and unpretentious, but very comfortable indeed. Landlady and servants alike are friendly and anxious to make us endure the time without annoyance or discomfort,—indeed, that's the way at every homelike, unfashionable inn we go to. These are surely the most friendly people in the world. The roughest of them knows how to be kind, and the busiest will stop

to be courteous. It's always the same story: stiff and ungracious in manner when first approached, but kindly, helpful, interested, communicative when once your need or question is stated,—even the railway porters, and the stage drivers!"

They moved onward to Ambleside and back to Durham, which Wilson greatly loved. He quoted Walter Scott's lines regarding Durham Castle, "half fortress and half church." At Durham they stopped at the inn where visitors are welcomed by the host with a glass of cherry bounce. They also got permission to attend the court which was opening on that day and was presided over by Lord Justice Grantham. Wilson often referred to the experience in Durham as a fine exhibit of the courtesy of the officials in giving an opportunity to two wandering Americans to visit the court. He was interested in the legal procedure and remarked afterward upon the speed with which the trial was carried forward. From Durham they went to Ely and Peterborough, where they visited the cathedrals.

On this trip Wilson especially enjoyed his visit at Cambridge, where his enthusiasm for the quad arrangement of the buildings was further incited.

"July 23, 1899. [At Cambridge.] . . .

"And Cambridge at the end of the ride! Oxford is more beautiful and impressive, but surely Cambridge is beautiful and impressive enough. We arrived about half-past twelve, and so had all the afternoon in which to enjoy a first and general impression. The most beautiful buildings and quads. are not five minutes walk from our hotel (King's College, for example, and Trinity, and St. John's) and we saw them at once, when we had had lunch, and made straight through them to the incomparable 'Backs.' The Cam, you know, runs close at the rear of these colleges, with here a broad lawn stretching between the buildings and its banks, as at King's, and there the very

walls of some shapely hall or dormitory standing with their feet in its stream (as if the road to the station at Princeton were a river—the Cam is no wider—and washed the very walls of Blair) so that men may sit and fish from their bedroom windows. At short intervals beautiful arched bridges cross the little river, sometimes from lawn to lawn, sometimes from building to building,—sometimes with a single arch, sometimes with three arches. St. John's crowds close to the water, stands in the water, indeed, on either bank, and throws across the stream an exquisite enclosed bridge of a single arch wh. is the Bridge of Sighs in small. On the farther side of the river stretch great lawns and splendid quiet avenues of trees, shaded walks, and beds of flowers almost wild; and nothing breaks the fine park except where, near its end, a building of St. John's stands, itself an ornament. And these are The Backs, flanked in the background by a parklike public road, into which you make exit through stately iron gates of elaborate tracery, crowned with the arms of a college. The river is full of boats for hire, and Stock and I took one and paddled slowly from end to end of the beautiful place, with unspeakable, quiet pleasure. Then we sat indefinitely at the side of one of the great lawns on the farther bank and just let the beauty and peace and sweet air of the place soak into us. There were pleasure seekers all about us—enough to people without crowding the scene, and tennis courts full of young fellows in white flannels, most of whom knew how to play the game well enough to be worth watching. . . . Oxford is more beautiful and more fascinating than Cambridge, but I know of no place in the kingdom more to be desired than Oxford. . . . Many extraordinary and truly revolutionary things have been happening here in consequence of the heat. One of the judges in London (or was it only a magistrate?) actually took off his wig in court and invited the barristers present

to follow his example! The Speaker of the House of Commons, the room being already quite too close to breathe in, broke an immemorial tradition by proceeding to a division without first closing the doors: the first instance of the kind, I suppose, in several hundred years! One wonders what would happen if they had heat such as ours. I suppose it would break down the English Constitution, wh. would seem in very fact to be a part of the established order of nature! And really it *has* been hot. Even we felt and suffered from it, *with our winter flannels on*. . . .

"Even the papers here contain such news of America as that Mr. Alger has resigned, and I am heartily glad, though it came much too late and I judge that the President's choice of Root does not improve matters very much. . . ."

He cannot say enough of Cambridge. One can see where he received some of the enthusiasm which he afterward exhibited in his campaign for the reconstruction of Princeton University:

"July 26, 1899. [At "The George," Lichfield.] . . .

"We left Cambridge yesterday, Tuesday, afternoon, having seen, I believe, all of the colleges except Girton and Newnham—that is, some fifteen in all; and it was thoroughly worth while to take time to see them. Everyone has *some*thing to give it individuality, and in the aggregate they are more impressive by far than the two or three great and beautiful ones, like Trinity and St. John's, could be if seen by themselves. Them we saw several times in the course of our three days' stay: but the others add a note of completeness and variety which was needed to make us comprehend the place in its entirety,—a place *full* of quiet chambers, secluded ancient courts, and gardens shut away from intrusion,—a town full of coverts for those who would learn and be with their own thoughts. I bring away from it a very keen sense of

what we lack in our democratic colleges, where no one has privacy or claims to have his own thoughts. . . ."

They visited Oxford, where Wilson spent some hours with Professor Dicey. Each evening he and Axson walked down to New College and sat there and chatted under a beech tree until late in the evening. Wilson called, while there, on Lawrence Hutton, a friend whom he greatly loved. He often said that Hutton had a "genius for friendship." Hutton lived at Max Müller's house at Oxford and they were much interested in going about it.

"August 6, 1899. [At the King's Arms, Oxford.] . . .

"I have of, course, gone about Oxford this time looking about me with the keenest and most constant interest, turning into quads; penetrating beyond quads. to delightful secluded gardens; peeping now into one and again into another quaint corner, and seeing a great deal; but I have not been able to bring myself to the point of 'doing' Oxford systematically, as we did Cambridge. My sight-seeing impetus has run out, as Stock's has. What is left is the power to *enjoy* places,—with a sort of quiet joy that forms and penetrates the thoughts, as if one were enjoying each place as for the time his home, and yielding himself to its influences as if he temporarily possessed it and looked on it as if on a familiar face. This is the sort of enjoyment that *rests* and refreshes. . . ."

In London he visits the "Mother of Parliaments" about which he had written and thought so much. He meets a beautiful English girl and takes the occasion to compare English and American beauty:

"English girls, when they are interesting, are unmistakably very attractive creatures. American girls (as surely all the world must see,—for *this* part of the world, at any rate, is full of them) have a great and obvious superiority in beauty, figure, style, grace, and a sort of *effectiveness;* but English girls are, I should judge, as a rule sweeter

and easier to love in an intimate, domestic fashion. When they get beauty, too, they are very dangerous."

He cannot resist another visit to Wells "where, take it all in all, I should rather be than anywhere else in England," and that leads him along to another visit to Bagehot's grave. Axson had fallen ill and had gone down to London, so that Wilson was now alone.

"Every turn of my ride brings me to things that interest me,—to some outlook upon a beautiful countryside, to some village all character and age, a beautiful church standing in its quiet yard in the midst, more noble in its proportions than most of our city churches, more lovingly finished in detail, though less ornate, an ancient monument of labour and of faith, conceived with a touch of majesty, and yet not too great for its secluded and rural seat,—only the village church; or some bright, busy town I never knew anything about, but now find worth seeing, with monuments and noble or curious buildings of its own, old and new. Taunton is such a place, where I spent Friday night. I never knew anything about Taunton. I now know that it is the place (at any rate one of the chief places) where the execrable Jeffries held his bloody assizes. I saw the great room, now bare and barn-like, in which he sat and condemned,—condemned *himself* for ever."

And finally he reaches, as every American should, the entrancing town of Clovelly:

"I can only suppose that Clovelly betwitched me! I reached the wonderful little place about midday on Tuesday,—just about the time I ought to have posted the letter,—and it fairly took my breath away with surprise and delight to find it in fact what I had been told it was, as extraordinary and as interesting as the heart could desire. And yet that very fact gave me the strongest feeling of unreality. I felt as if I were walking in a picture, through a

piece of stage scenery, thro. a sort of devised street built at a cunningly constructed World's Fair. And, to cap the climax, at my Inn, which was at the very heart of that incomparable precipitous street in the Cloven cliff, they put me in a little house all by itself, above the roof of the hotel,—a room to which I had to climb through a little wonderfully tilted garden at the rear, all staircases and narrow terraces. The little house was on the topmost terrace of all, and contained nothing but my room and a half cellar, opening from the next terrace below. The whole of one end of the room was taken up with its door and a bay-window as wide as our hall-way oriel. The dressing table stood in the bay, and before me as I sat at it stretched all the sea, between the cliff-shoulders of the narrow place, —below the steep town and the boats dancing in the tiny roadstead. I was so excited and *moved* by the pleasure and novelty of it all that I caught myself laughing aloud as I stood in my strange little room. I wandered about with the restless curiosity and delight of a child, peeping into every nook and corner of the place (it did not take long) and looking into door-ways, with a child's indifference to good manners, getting run into by other sight-seers, and almost run into by the little donkeys whose panniers are the only possible vehicles of the village. At last, at the bottom of the street, on the jetty which helps make a shelter for the fishing boats, I sat down in supreme contentment just to dream,—of the place, of the sea, of you,—of the happiness it would be to bring you there, of the unspeakable pity of it all that you were *not* there. . . ."

Here also he had the surprise of meeting old friends from Middletown, Connecticut:

"There were Mrs. Hazen and Miss Hazen, too, the Dr.'s sister, and Maynard. You may imagine how I rushed at them, escorted them all over the village, like a new guide, and spent the evening with them."

Finally he crosses to Ireland to see Trinity College and visit places connected with the memory of Burke:

"I did not come out of Dublin without looking at it. After I had had my breakfast, I rode about the city on my wheel and saw a great deal of it,—the Castle, the old Parliament houses, and all that I could think of as worth seeing, but most particularly, of course, Trinity College. Its gates were open, Sunday tho. it was; and I wandered through its quads. for quite half an hour with my thoughts full of Burke. The buildings are not beautiful, but they are dignified and spacious, constructed in the formal style I associate with Sir Christopher Wren,—Greek, Pseudo-Greek, or whatever it is. The magnitude of the college struck me, quad. within quad, and round about two sides spacious gardens. I should say the circumference of the whole was nearly a mile,—and that in the very heart of the city. At the front of the buildings, on the street, or, rather on sward which intervenes between the buildings and the street, stand striking statues of Burke and Goldsmith; and in the open space which the college faces (one might call it a square were it not almost triangular) there is an uncommonly fine statue, of Grattan, facing the college, but also in front of the old Parliament buildings, which also face the same space or square. Aside from these special objects of interest, the city struck me as singularly unattractive, plebeian, without distinction,—except that it must surely, from what I saw, be one of the dirtiest cities in the world. I was very much disappointed, of course, not to get a chance even to try to see Mr. and Mrs. Dowden; but they live eight miles away from Dublin, very likely are not at home at this season of the year, and—it was quite impossible to manage."

Axson rejoined Wilson at Glasgow, and they sailed on August 26th on the *City of Rome*. In the mid-Atlantic the ship ran into an iceberg and barely escaped being broken

in two. It slid upward upon one of the projections of the iceberg which finally broke off, but it did not recover its balance. The collision happened while they were all at dinner, and Dr. Axson said that Wilson's composure during this time was remarkable.

Wilson returned to Princeton restored in health and spirits.

CHAPTER XIV

THE AUTHOR

I would not have you think that the writer of books is less steadily in search of reality than the builder of states or the conductor of great material enterprises or the man who is in the midst of action. . . . The man of letters has conceived his function too narrowly who does not see this.

Address delivered in Pittsburgh, November 5, 1903.

Politics can be successfully studied only as life; as the vital embodiment of opinions, prejudices, sentiments, the product of human endeavour, and therefore full of human characteristics of whim and ignorance and half knowledge; as a process of circumstance and of interacting impulses, a thing growing with thought and habit and social development—a thing various, complex, subtle, defying all analysis save that of insight. And the language of direct sight is the language of literature.

"A System of Political Science and Constitutional Law."

Great books have changed men's lives and altered the current of history.

Address, November 5, 1903.

I. LITERARY AMBITIONS

IT MUST never be forgotten that Woodrow Wilson's primary interest, always, everywhere, was in affairs, in government, in politics. A minute examination of letters and documents relating to his earlier years shows beyond a doubt that however deep his concern with education, with lecturing, with authorship, down beneath them all was the profound sense that they were incidental or preparatory. His real purpose, as he covenanted with his friend Talcott, was "the work of establishing the principles we held in common . . . to mould the world as our hands might please."

When he left Atlanta in 1883, as we have seen, he had

given over his ambition for active participation in political affairs—at least he thought he had!—but the underlying purpose remained the same. He would teach other men the true attitude toward the nation, he would write books that should stir sluggish citizens to reform their institutions, and finally he would produce a vast fundamental treatise, a "Novum Organon of Politics" which should serve to guide the thought of the world as Montesquieu had guided France, as Burke, or Adam Smith, or Cobden, had guided England.

His first and most original book, *Congressional Government*, was outwardly an objective essay in political criticism written with rare clarity and force, but back of it lay his primary intent:

"... if ever any book was written with fulness and earnestness of conviction, with purpose of imparting conviction, that book was: and, in my view, the extent to which it realizes that purpose is the standard of its success. Of course I should like to be able to believe that it was to stand as a permanent piece of constitutional criticism by reason of some depth of historical and political insight: but its mission was to *stir* thought and to carry irresistible practical suggestion, and it was as such a missionary that it carried my hopes and ambitions with it. I carefully kept all advocacy of particular reforms out of it, because I wanted it to be, so far as I could make it such, a permanent piece of work, not a political pamphlet, which couldn't succeed without destroying its own reason for being; but I hoped at the same time that it might catch hold of its readers' convictions and set reform a-going in a very definite direction."[1]

Here in Wilson's own words lies the soul of his purpose. In order, however, to accomplish the end he aims at, he must write well, write greatly. Only by this method can

[1]Letter to R. Heath Dabney, October 28, 1885.

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he make his ideas prevail. Literature, style, is not an end but a means.

"Style is an instrument, and is made imperishable only by embodiment in some great use. It is not of itself stuff to last; neither can it have real beauty except when working the substantial effects of thought or vision. Its highest triumph is to hit the meaning; and the pleasure you get from it is not unlike that which you get from the perfect action of skill. The object is so well and so easily attained!"[1]

Politics, education, scholarship, if they are made living forces, must depend upon a skilled literary method.

". . . scholarship cannot do without literature. It needs literature to float it, to set it current, to authenticate it to the race, to get it out of closets, and into the brains of men who stir abroad."[2]

He regrets profoundly the tendency in both political and economic writing toward a dull, scientific, rather than a literary or artistic method.

"The new-school economists revolt, and say they want 'a more scientific method.' What they really want is a higher literary method."[3]

Wilson desired passionately to become a great writer, and there were times in his life, especially during the earlier years of the Princeton professorship, when he himself plainly thought that authorship had become his true vocation. He was a "man of letters."[4]

"He was eager to get to his desk, to do his 'day's stint,' as he called it; humorously resented his lecturing days as 'interruptions'—then apologized for so characterizing them for it seemed infidelity to duty. In Princeton in the

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[1] "A Wit and a Seer," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1898.

[2] *Mere Literature*, p. 19.

[3] *An Old Master*, p. 53.

[4] This was always Mrs. Wilson's ambition for her husband.

middle 'nineties we used frequently to ride our bicycles in the late long pleasant summer afternoons toward Lawrenceville. There was an old arched stone bridge crossing a little stream where we frequently paused, sitting on the coping, and talked long about the art of writing. He once said, 'We who know literature by sight have the responsibility of carrying on a war with those to whom so-called "scholarship" is everything.' . . .

"There was a time when he was so preoccupied with literary 'style' that it approached obsession."[1]

But Wilson's literary work was never the measure of his greatness. He was highly gifted in literary expression, he had many of the qualifications of the artist, and he produced voluminously and successfully, but it never seemed to give him, at any time, a sense of complete self-realization or fulfilment.

Wilson's literary work, almost all of which was done while he was a college professor, from 1885 to 1902, may be divided into three quite distinct groups: political, literary, and historical. This classification may also be considered roughly chronological. His political writings were his earliest; until 1891 he had scarcely touched any other field; the literary essays, coruscating sparks struck off in the course of his swift progress toward other ends, represent the middle period, and the histories the later and more hurried product of his pen. He gave much thought to two other subjects, education and religion, and discussed them frequently in addresses and lectures, some of which were afterward published, but they form little or no part of his deliberate literary production.

II. POLITICAL WRITINGS

Wilson's political writings are in every way his most important. His characteristic book, the father of them all,

[1]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

Congressional Government, has already been sufficiently treated in this biography. It had many descendants and relatives, notably *The State*—a "dull fact book," as Wilson called it—*Constitutional Government in the United States*, made up of a series of lectures at Columbia University, and scores of articles for reviews and magazines, dealing with political problems and leadership.

None of his lesser writings, perhaps, lay closer to his essential interest, or were produced with more real pleasure than his treatment of political leaders and thinkers, and his reviews of books concerning them. If a man is "interpreted by his admirations," there could be no better guide to an understanding of Woodrow Wilson than his series of essays dealing with the gods of the political heavens. Foremost among these, of course, are the chapters on Bagehot—"A Literary Politician"—and on Burke—"The Interpreter of English Liberty"—published in his book, *Mere Literature*. Bagehot and Burke were his guides and exemplars. There are also significant essays on Sir Henry Maine, Adam Smith, John Bright, William E. Gladstone, and others.

One of the most illuminating of his studies is that in which he endeavours to analyze and place the leaders of America. It is called "A Calendar of Great Americans" and was first published in the *Forum* for February, 1894. It abounds in pithy characterizations. His omissions from the list are as significant as his inclusions. However critics may disagree with his characterizations, they will be found interesting and interpretive.

"The great Englishmen bred in America, like Hamilton and Madison; the great provincials, like John Adams and Calhoun; the authors of such thought as might have been native to any clime, like Asa Gray and Emerson; and the men of mixed breed, like Jefferson and Benton,—must be excluded from our present list. We must pick out

men who have created or exemplified a distinctively American standard and type of greatness."[1]

It is indeed a rare historian or political writer who can steer his way safely between the Scylla of Hamilton and the Charybdis of Jefferson. Even Wilson, at that period in his life, while a traditional Democrat, leaned more than "the shade of a hair" toward Hamilton,[2] but he saw clearly that it required both of them to make a nation. In later years he drew much nearer to Jefferson. While he calls Hamilton "one of the greatest figures in our history," though not an "American," he goes on to say:

"He rejected, if he did not despise, democratic principles; advocated a government as strong, almost, as a monarchy; and defended the government which was actually set up, like the skilled advocate he was, only because it was the strongest that could be had under the circumstances. He believed in authority, and he had no faith in the aggregate wisdom of masses of men."[3]

Wilson likewise doubts the full Americanism of Jefferson:

"Jefferson was not a thorough American because of the strain of French philosophy that permeated and weakened all his thought. . . . He thought of the Roman Senate when he sat in the Senate of the United States. He paraded classical figures whenever he spoke, upon a stage where both their costume and their action seemed grotesque."[4]

But he says:

"The American shows in him very plainly, too, notwithstanding the strong and inherent dash of what was foreign in his make-up. He was a natural leader and manager of men, not because he was imperative or master-

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[1] *Mere Literature*, p. 187.

[2] Wilson was a great admirer of Oliver's *Alexander Hamilton.*

[3] *Mere Literature*, p. 189.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 196–197.

ful, but because of a native shrewdness, tact, and sagacity, an inborn art and aptness for combination, such as no Frenchman ever displayed in the management of common men. Jefferson had just a touch of rusticity about him, besides; and it was not pretense on his part or merely a love of power that made him democratic. . . . It is his speculative philosophy that is exotic, and that runs like a false and artificial note through all his thought. It was un-American in being abstract, sentimental, rationalistic, rather than practical. That he held it sincerely need not be doubted; but the more sincerely he accepted it so much the more thoroughly he was un-American. His writings lack hard and practical sense. Liberty, among us, is not a sentiment, but a product of experience; its derivation is not rationalistic, but practical."[1]

The first man to exhibit the true American spirit "with an unmistakable touch of greatness and distinction," he finds to be Benjamin Franklin, and he became afterward so much interested in Franklin that he wrote an introduction to a new edition of the *Autobiography*.

Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson were indeed Americans, and so was Robert E. Lee, but the "supreme American of our history" was Abraham Lincoln. It is interesting that Wilson, with his Southern origin and strong feeling for his own people, should have come so early to such an objective historical conclusion. His enthusiasm for Lincoln continued unabated throughout his life.

"In Clay, East and West were mixed without being fused or harmonized: he seems like two men. In Jackson there was not even a mixture; he was all of a piece, and altogether unacceptable to some parts of the country,—a frontier statesman. But in Lincoln the elements were combined and harmonized. . . . He never ceased to be a common man: that was his source of strength. But he was

[1] *Mere Literature*, p. 198.

a common man with genius, a genius for things American, for insight into the common thought, for mastery of the fundamental things of politics that inhere in human nature and cast hardly more than their shadows on constitutions; for the practical niceties of affairs; for judging men and assessing arguments. . . . And, as he stands there in his complete manhood, at the most perilous helm in Christendom, what a marvellous composite figure he is! The whole country is summed up in him: the rude Western strength, tempered with shrewdness and a broad and humane wit; the Eastern conservatism, regardful of law and devoted to fixed standards of duty. He even understood the South, as no other Northern man of his generation did. He respected, because he comprehended, though he could not hold, its view of the Constitution; he appreciated the inexorable compulsions of its past in respect of slavery; he would have secured it once more, and speedily if possible, in its right to self-government, when the fight was fought out. To the Eastern politicians he seemed like an accident; but to history he must seem like a providence."[1]

One aspect of Wilson's political writing has been too little known or appreciated. He was a singularly acute and suggestive critic, both of men and of books. His articles on various leaders and thinkers of an older time, already referred to, are not only excellent literary creations, but fine criticism.

Four or five of the best examples of his powers in this direction are scarcely known at all because they were written as unsigned reviews for the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Forum*, and other journals. He wrote them *con amore*, giving free rein to his ripe judgments. Among these are reviews of Bryce's *American Commonwealth* (1889), Bur-

[1] *Mere Literature*, pp. 206, 207, 208.

gess's *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law* (1891), Boutmy's *Studies in Constitutional Law* (1891), John T. Morse's *Abraham Lincoln* (1893), Edward L. Pierce's *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner* (1893), Rhodes's *History of the United States* (1893), and a biting criticism of Goldwin Smith's writings (1893).

One of the best of these critical articles is his review of Bryce's great book.[1] He had met Bryce at Johns Hopkins and had the deepest admiration for the man and his work. Bryce "studied society alive," and while Wilson thinks he did not fully understand the growth of the American nation, yet the book is incomparably the best in the field. Wilson makes admirable comparisons between Bryce and De Tocqueville, as well as between British and American institutions. He remarks finally:

"There still remains to be accomplished the work of explaining democracy *by* America, in supplement of Mr. Bryce's admirable explanation of democracy *in* America."

Wilson's views of John W. Burgess and his work are also highly interpretive. He had been in some doubt, so conscientious was he as a scholar, as to whether he should write about Burgess's book at all.

"I don't know whether I ought to accept the office of reviewer in the case of Burgess's book or not. If you happen to remember a conversation we once had about Burgess & his opinions you will see why I hesitate. I shall open the book expecting to find a great deal in it to disagree with and criticize, and I suppose that that is a frame of mind which would make my purpose to be impartial,—to admire what is admirable even in a writer of an opposite school—rather awkward to carry out. Still, I mean to read the book and to appreciate it, and, if you think that even under the circumstances, you could trust me to criticize it by means of a fair test of thought,

[1] In the *Political Science Quarterly*, March, 1889.

rather than an unfair test of prepossession, I will write the notice you propose with pleasure."[1]

In analyzing Burgess's book, Wilson vividly discloses his own point of view. Burgess has two cardinal faults. First he looks at society as a mechanism, not as a living thing:

"A state cannot be born unawares, cannot spring unconsciously into being. To think otherwise is to conceive mechanically, and not in terms of life. To teach otherwise is to deaden effort, to leave no function for patriotism. If the processes of politics are unconscious and unintelligent, why then this blind mechanism may take care of itself; there is nothing for us to do."[2]

But as Wilson says, expressing his own conviction:

"The method of political science, on the contrary, is the interpretation of life; its instrument is insight, a nice understanding of subtle, unformulated conditions. For this latter method Mr. Burgess's mind seems unfit. . . . He has strong powers of reasoning, but he has no gift of insight."[3]

In the second place, Burgess "does not write in the language of literature, but in the language of science." Here he comes strongly to his own thesis:

"There is no 'style' about such writing; words are used simply as counters, without regard to the material out of which they are made, or to the significance which they bear in their hearts. A book thus constituted may be read much and consulted often, but can itself never live: it is not made up of living tissue. It may suggest life, but it cannot impart it. Doubtless the artificers of such writings do not pretend to be making literature, but they have no choice; if they do not write literature, they do

[1]Letter to Horace E. Scudder, February 7, 1891.

[2]*The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 194–195.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 195.

not write truth. . . . Politics can be successfully studied only as life; as the vital embodiment of opinions, prejudices, sentiments, the product of human endeavour, and therefore full of human characteristics of whim and ignorance and half knowledge; as a process of circumstance and of interacting impulses, a thing growing with thought and habit and social development—a thing various, complex, subtle, defying all analysis save that of insight. And the language of direct sight is the language of literature."[1]

Rhodes's history, the early volumes of which were appearing, he admires for its thoroughness and its magnitude, but he cannot follow the writer's treatment of the South. He regards it as wholly mistaken to treat the Civil War as the treason of one section of the country and the righteous apotheosis of the other. There was no treason, since there had been no nation until the war determined the question of sovereignty.[2]

In the slashing review of Goldwin Smith's book on American political history, which appeared in the *Forum* for December, 1893, he assails Smith for his acceptance of the "expansion of New England" idea of American history and advances his views of the importance of the middle colonies and the development of the frontier as the peculiar characteristic of American civilization. He is thoroughly convinced that American history is not a "history of origins. It is just the opposite: it is the history of developments." He makes the striking statement:

"The typical Americans have all been western men, with the exception of Washington."

Besides these political essays and reviews, Wilson's pen was employed with the discussion of current political and economic problems and personalities. Such, for

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 196.

[2] See *Woodrow Wilson and His Work*, by William E. Dodd, p. 27.

example, are his articles on Grover Cleveland, on the tariff, the trusts, and other subjects; on Southern reconstruction; and, broadly, upon the subject of democracy.

III. ESSAYIST

Wilson once told a friend that "he had never written but two real books in his life, *Congressional Government* and *Mere Literature;* with the latter he had a great deal of fun, keeping it for hours of relaxation."[1]

Next to his political writing, in his own esteem, came his literary essays. He delighted in them. He loved to work upon them—he worked too much upon them! They were the by-products of his studies of the craft of the writer: such essays as "Mere Literature," "The Author Himself," "On the Author's Choice of Company," and the like. Or they expressed his opinions upon the art of the lecturer as in the essay entitled "An Old Master." Or they represented his ripe thinking upon the work of the historian, as in the essays, "The Truth of the Matter," "The Course of American History," and others. There were also several essays on what may be called the art of life—"When a Man Comes to Himself," "On Being Human"—each of them having pregnant autobiographical significances.

At heart, Wilson was a poet; and all through his earlier years he entertained an ambition to write poetry, as well as essays. He even tried his hand at stories! But he confessed to his wife:

". . . I am no poet, unless the mere fact of being an idealist of itself constitutes me one,—and those lines written the other day are no poem. The night I wrote them I thought they were. A hot fire was in my brain . . . and, while I wrote I thought I was writing poetry—for I thought I was writing down what was in my head. But

[1]Mrs. Crawford H. Toy, diary entry January 2, 1915.

reading the lines now I can see no reason for their measure (their occasional rhymes were purely accidental): they are mere metrical prose. That I am an idealist, with the heart of a poet, I do not hesitate to avow: but that fact is not reassuring. On the contrary it is tragical. . . . If I could only write prose that was delicate, imaginative, full at once of grace, force, and distinction, that would be something: my thoughts would at least go clad like aristocrats. But alas! I shall but wear my soul out trying."[1]

In spite of the ardour of these aspirations, he never regards his literary work as an end, but always as a means. Sometimes he even goes so far as to speak of his essays as mere "exercises." He wrote to Scudder:

"The fact of the matter is, that I am afraid to keep constantly intent upon my special topics of study. It is my creed that literary training and method are as essential to the production of good political science as to the production of good poetry or valid criticism. It is my practice, consequently, to try my hand, whenever I can, at various sorts of writing as unlike my professional tasks as possible. The essay I send you is one of my 'Exercises.' If I am mistaken in believing it suitable for publication, I'm sure you'll know it, and save me the mistake."[2]

And in sending an essay on Burke to Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *Century Magazine*, he writes, ". . . these papers are distinctively literary. They might be called studies in literary method."[3]

Like Stevenson, he was a true "sedulous ape" of many of the greater old English writers in his effort to develop and strengthen his style. His friend, Professor George M. Harper of Princeton, says:

"And so he set himself to work cultivating the graces

[1]February 19, 1895.
[2]May 19, 1891.
[3]March 15, 1898.

of style no less assiduously than the exactness of science. There is a distinct filiation in his diction, by which, from Stevenson to Lamb and from Lamb to Sir Thomas Browne, one can trace it back to the quaint old prose writers of the seventeenth century. I remember his calling my attention, in 1890, or thereabouts, to the delightful stylistic qualities of those worthies. Many of his colours are from their inkhorns, in which the pigments were of deep and varied hues. When he is sententious and didactic he seems to have caught something of Emerson's manner. And indeed there is in all his writings a flavour of optimism and a slightly dogmatic, even when thoroughly gentle and persuasive, tone which he has in common with the New England sage." [1]

He is conscientious to the last degree in the pursuit of literary excellence:

"I must beg you to indulge me in the matter of hyphens. You will find that I have marked out a great many in the proofs. We are in danger of Germanizing our printing by using them so much; and I have a very decided preference in the matter."[2]

He once remarked impatiently that the American printer was "hyphen mad."

And in a letter to Scudder of January 1, 1887, he sets forth plainly his attitude toward his writing other than political:

"Meantime, since I cannot work directly upon my *magnum opus*, I am half inclined to write, as bits of leisure may allow, on lighter, more literary themes, in order to loosen the joints of my style and vary the paces of my mind. Although I have *spoken* hitherto only on political subjects, knowing that in that direction, if in any, my

[1] From an excellent introduction to a collection of Wilson's addresses published in 1918.

[2] Letter to Harper & Brothers, September 14, 1896. Original owned by Owen D. Young.

special aptitudes lay, my taste for all sorts of themes that afford outlooks over men's life and thought has often tempted me to try my hand at other topics; and I have been deterred only by a strong sense of the importance of concentration. The question with me now is, how much concentration is compatible with breadth—and how far limitation of topic entails poverty of style. The style being the personality of the work, must not the style speak many interests and wide and various aptitudes if the work is to gain admission to patrician society in literature?"

In the beginning, while his political writings were eagerly published, he had the usual sad experience of authors with his more purely literary writings. He was often rejected!

"I didn't blame Mr. Burlingame in the least for returning my *ms.* I expected to see it come back. I had made my touch as light and attractive as I knew how, and cleared it of all technicalities,—had made it 'popular' as best I could; but the subject (I called it 'An Old Master,' but it was Adam Smith after all) *was* such as an editor of a *Maga.* naturally shies at, and I confidently expected it home again."[1]

It is interesting, however, that six years later the same publishing house—Scribner's—brought out his first book of essays and the first essay in it, "An Old Master," gave its name to the volume. He dedicated it to his old friend Bridges—"To Robert Bridges with hearty acknowledgment of long and tried friendship"—writing to him a characteristically affectionate letter:

"I thought it not improper, between old friends, to let you discover the dedication of my 'Old Master'; you have discovered it, and you have written about it in a way that goes to my heart—as so many of the things you have *done*

[1]Letter to Robert Bridges, March 3, 1887.

for me have. I love and honour you, Bob, with a depth of feeling which I like to acknowledge. The dedication was made to please myself, by associating my name with yours. That you take pleasure in it is so my clear, delightful gain."[1]

He loved the dedication of his books, especially if he could make it a surprise, for it enabled him to pay a tribute to some dear friend. Thus we find *Mere Literature* dedicated to Stockton Axson:

TO
STOCKTON AXSON
BY EVERY GIFT OF MIND A CRITIC
AND LOVER OF LETTERS
BY EVERY GIFT OF HEART A FRIEND
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

The *George Washington* and the *History* are both dedicated to his wife.

All of Wilson's essays coruscate with brilliant and highly wrought literary felicities. Indeed they are often marked by a certain overemphasis, sometimes a preciosity, and there is frequently a dependence upon adjectives that weaken rather than strengthen his diction. His bluff old father sometimes criticized him bluntly for the use of such words as "'tis " for "it is"; and after reading the *George Washington* remarked, "Woodrow, I am glad you let George do his own dying in your book." No one was more clearly aware of these deficiencies than Wilson himself:

"I must straightway prove my right to call myself a critic by pointing out to you two cardinal defects in what I write. There is, first, a serious structural defect, noticeable most of all in the literary essays. . . . The transitions are

[1] October 12, 1893.

managed *too* smoothly: the several stages of the argument are not distinct enough: you bring away no definite outline, but only a recollection of certain passages and a general impression of the whole meaning. The treatment plays in circles; it does not move with directness along a clear course.

"There is, besides a fault of style: and here, again, the literary essays are the best field of observation. The phrasing is too elaborate: has not the easy pace of simplicity. The sentences are too obviously wrought out with a nice workmanship. They do not sound as if they had come spontaneously, but as if they had been waited for,—perhaps waited for anxiously. The fact is not so. They come fast and hot enough usually, and seem natural moulds for my thought. But I am speaking of the impression they make when read,—the impression they make upon *me* after they are cold,—when read in the proof, for example."[1]

Such observations as these, made to intimate friends, no doubt overemphasize with characteristic intensity Wilson's discontent with his own work, and to that extent misrepresent him. They tend to give an impression of introspection, an egocentric interest, which is not discoverable in any like measure in his attitude toward his other and greater concerns—politics and education. Authors often like to talk about their purposes and processes, and to decry their own product that they may stimulate helpful criticism, and Wilson did it always with a certain naïveté—and in conversation, with a smile on his lips and a disengaging liveliness and charm of manner. He was in reality profoundly interested in his literary work, every aspect of it, and if his call in other directions had not been so powerful, he might easily have devoted his life to writing.

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Mrs. Harry Fielding Reid, June 18, 1897.

Wilson's early work, especially the essays, was marked by an overdependence upon quotation, especially from certain favourite writers like Bagehot and Burke. His reading had been deep and his scholarship thorough, and he loved to draw upon the rich storehouses of the older writers.

". . . the men who were closest to Wilson at Princeton thought that he quoted too much, both in his conversation and in his books."[1]

In the essay on Adam Smith, for example, he quoted from Bagehot, Buckle, Sterne, Dugald Stewart, and Dr. Barnard. He employed one Latin quotation. He mentioned Montesquieu, Lanfranc, Abélard, Colet, Blackstone, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Physiocrats.

In the essay called "The Study of Politics," he quoted from John Stuart Mill, Sidney Colvin, Carlyle, Lord Elgin, Monsieur Bacourt. He mentioned in this one essay Shakespeare, Rousseau, Spencer, Adolph Wagner, De Tocqueville, Bagehot, Professor Dicey, Burke, James Bryce, John Morley, Ricardo, Sidney Smith, Samuel Romilly, Cromwell, Hamerton, Patrick Henry, Lincoln, Walter Savage Landor, Greville, Cicero, Lord Grey, Walpole, Pepys, Evelyn, and Madame de Rémusat.

But this overemphasis—the expression of the intensity of his nature—these defects, if they were defects, swiftly disappear as the man comes to grapples with the stark realities of a world crisis. In his greatest messages and public papers, when he was the accepted leader of world affairs, his style becomes lean, vigorous, scholarly. Overemphasis and decoration drop away; there is no need for them. Bagehot and Burke are left years behind; there is rarely any quotation whatsoever. He has reached the

[1]Professor Bliss Perry to the author. It is singular, in this connection, that one of his bitterest critics of later years, Senator Lodge, argues his want of scholarship, on the ground that his writings and addresses contain so few quotations and classical references!

highest triumph of style—one without superfluity—one that exactly hits the meaning he seeks to convey.

". . . it may now be said without any imputation of partisanship that Wilson's greatest messages and speeches challenge in range of thought and beauty of expression the noblest utterances in the political history of our race."[1]

Could this mastery have been attained without the sedulous practice of the earlier years? The impatient self-criticism? Would it have been possible without the intense devotion to style that led to over-emphasis, without that admiring imitation of the great masters which led to over-quotation? When the call came, the tools were ready. So much that appears self-conscious in the early, preparatory years, wholly sloughs away when he steps out upon the stage of great affairs, has to meet problems equal to his powers.

But the essays, if they were marked by minor blemishes, were remarkable for many excellences. One of these certainly was a gift for the winged phrase:

"His mind is a great comfort to every man who has one. . . ."[2]

Another was Wilson's facility in the apt characterization of men. In one of his earliest productions he says of William Pitt:

"William Pitt was a noble statesman; the Earl of Chatham was a noble ruin."[3]

He can write of Rousseau:

"Sometimes theorists like Rousseau, being near enough the truth to deceive even those who know something of it, are so unfortunate as to induce men to rear fabrics of government after their aërial patterns out of earth's

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[1]Professor Bliss Perry, in his monograph, *Woodrow Wilson.*

[2]*Mere Literature*, p. 45.

[3]"William Earl Chatham," an essay published first in the *Nassau Literary Magazine* of October, 1878. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 17.

stuffs, with the result of bringing every affair of weight crashing about their ears, to the shaking of the world."[1]

Of Adam Smith:

"Here, then, is the picture of this Old Master: a quiet, awkward, forceful Scotchman, whose philosophy has entered everywhere into the life of politics and become a world force in thought; an impracticable Commissioner of Customs, who has left for the instruction of statesmen a theory of taxation; an unbusiness-like professor, who established the science of business; a man of books, who is universally honoured by men of action; plain, eccentric, learned, inspired. The things that strike us most about him are, his boldness of conception and wideness of outlook, his breadth and comprehensiveness of treatment, and his carefully clarified and beautified style. He was no specialist, except *in the relations of things*."[2]

IV. HISTORIAN

Wilson's historical writing was always a secondary or subservient interest with him. It represents the most voluminous and the least important part of his literary product. While the best of his political writings and the literary essays sprang freshly out of his own initiative, all three of his principal historical works—*Division and Reunion*, *George Washington*, and *A History of the American People*—were written upon the invitation or at the urging of editors. This is true also of most of his lesser historical papers.

But this does not mean that Wilson was not profoundly interested in history. No man of his time, perhaps, had a clearer understanding of the course of American history. He regarded history, indeed, as the foundation for his own studies in political institutions. How understand the

[1] *An Old Master*, p. 33.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.

present without knowing the past? How guide the future without a clear sense of the "roads already travelled"?

"The historian is also a sort of prophet."[1]

No one has written finer appreciations of the art of the historian, or the function of history, than Woodrow Wilson in such essays as "The Truth of the Matter" and "The Course of American History." For the great political work he himself planned, and never wrote, his "Novum Organon of Politics," he knew how wide and deep must be his historical preparation. Toward the close of his Princeton professorship, he was planning a trip to Europe, to lay the necessary historical foundations.[2]

But the writing of history as history was quite a different thing. He had indeed an early ambition to match Green's *Short History of the English People* with a corresponding American work—which fructified in his own History—but always the work seemed incidental, secondary to other purposes. He never appeared to give his historical writings the full power of his thought. He seemed always to be holding back his most penetrating conclusions for some greater and riper work. He seemed to seek the picturesque rather than the significant. If he had applied the same shrewd critical judgments in his histories that we find in his political writings, especially in some of the lesser essays and reviews, they would have been far greater works. But his interests were primarily political and not historical. His books are highly polished in their literary style—in this respect he was unremitting—they are full of picturesque and interesting material, constructed upon sound historical judgments, and they have had a wide popular following, but they miss being great history.

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[1] *Mere Literature*, p. 213.

[2] The judgment of his fellow American historians is indicated by his election to the presidency of the American Historical Association.

Wilson himself, with his usual sureness of understanding, characterized his own work:

"I am interested in historical examples as a mere historian. I was guilty myself of the indiscretion of writing a history, but I will tell you frankly, if you will not let it go further, that I wrote it, not to instruct anybody else, but to instruct myself. I wrote the history of the United States in order to learn it. That may be an expensive process for other persons who bought the book, but I lived in the United States and my interest in learning their history was, not to remember what happened, but to find which way we were going."[1]

He also considered his historical writings, the by-product of his necessary studies, as a means of increasing his meagre income as a college professor.

". . . the editors of the popular monthlies offer me such prices nowadays that I am corrupted. I am to appear in a serial of twelve numbers next year,—next century;—upon what subject and where I believe I am not at liberty to say yet. But it is to be a piece of work I meant to do anyway,—and I alter the quality not a bit,—nor dilute the stuff, neither,—to suit the medium. I am my own master in method. It will keep me working tooth and nail the rest of the year and much of 1901."[2]

And, finally, while he writes to his wife: "Ah, how I should like to make you glad by making it, both in truth and execution, a *really* great work,"[3] he is conscious at the very moment that it is of secondary concern, for he continues:

"There *ought* to be a genuinely first class narrative in me somewhere,—though out and out adequacy of conception

[1] "Robert E. Lee: An Interpretation," an address delivered on the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Lee, at the University of North Carolina, January 19, 1909. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. II, p. 73.

[2] Woodrow Wilson to Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, February 21, 1900.

[3] February 25, 1900.

must no doubt wait for *Statesmanship: A Study in Political Action and Leadership.*"

In short, his primary purpose is the preparation of the great book on politics—the "P. o. P." of his dreams.

And finally he himself, after years of devotion to history and historical writing, thus sums up the whole matter in a letter to his old friend, Professor Frederick J. Turner of Wisconsin University:

"I was forty-five three weeks ago, and between forty-five and fifty-five, I take it, is when a man ought to do the work into which he expects to put most of himself. I love history, and think that there are few things so directly rewarding and worthwhile for their own sakes as to scan the history of one's own country with a careful eye, and write of it with the all absorbing desire to get its cream and spirit out. But, after all, I was born a politician, and must be at the task for which, by means of my historical writing, I have all these years been in training. If I finish at fifty-five, shall I not have fifteen richly contemplative years left, if the Lord be good to me! But, then, the Lord may prefer to be good to the world!"[1]

Nevertheless, Wilson's historical writings are highly interpretive from a biographical point of view. They show how deeply he had thought upon the essentials of American history and how clear were his beliefs. He knew where America had its origins, how it had developed; he knew the forces most potently in action, and he looked ahead, as the man of vision must, to the next things to be achieved. An understanding of these intellectual foundations of the man will assist greatly in the interpretation of some of his decisions during the great years of the Presidency. Here, as in the development of his style, everything counted in his preparation. If his written histories were of secondary importance in themselves, they helped to com-

[1]January 21, 1902.

plete his knowledge, ripen his judgment, enlarge his powers of expression, against the hard days that were to come. His thorough knowledge of the history of the United States undoubtedly prevented the nation from making the costliest of mistakes during the Great War.

Wilson's model as an historian was Green's *Short History of the English People*. He regarded this, always, as an epoch-making book. It concerned itself less with arid chronicles of wars and princely reigns, even the mechanics of constitutions, than with the development of society, and it was constructed with imagination and literary art. Wilson also read Buckle with something of the same enthusiasm.

Facts merely as isolated facts he despised. "Kiln-dried stuff!" What he wanted was the meaning and significance of the facts.

"This is called collecting facts 'for the sake of the facts themselves'; but if I wished to do aught for the sake of the facts themselves I think I should serve them better by giving their true biographies than by merely displaying their faces."[1]

One must understand the life, the spirit, that lies back of the facts, and no one not a literary artist could interpret and present that spirit. Wilson came at a time when the scientific historical method was in the strength of its great beginnings; although he was influenced by it and indebted to it, he resisted utter subjection to it.

". . . the history of nations is spiritual, not material, a thing, not of institutions, but of the heart and the imagination."[2]

The poets were truer guides than the scientists. History, like life, was not merely a science, it was an art. Nor

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[1] *Mere Literature*, p. 216.

[2] "The Significance of American History," Preface to Vol. I of Harper's Encyclopædia of American History, published December 3, 1901.

could life be explained upon a theory or a dogma—even the popular dogma of economic determinism.

". . . men love gain, they . . . sometimes love each other."[1]

This intense sense of life, growth, spirit, underlay all of Wilson's studies both of history and of politics. Out of it grew also a second conviction, contrary to the predominant historical attitude of that time. Everything did not begin with the pilgrim forefathers. The history of the United States was not a separate thing, it was "an integral portion of the general history of civilization; a free working-out upon a clear field, indeed, of selected forces generated long ago in England and the old European world, but no irregular invention, no histrionic vindication of the Rights of Man."[2]

He was confirmed in this belief by his studies of English and indeed Continental parliamentary systems which underlay his *Congressional Government* and *The State*. The American system was not a miraculous birth, but a progress and development. It rested firmly upon tradition, else it could not have survived. He was not alone, of course, in his reappraisement of the American Revolution and its causes. There were other students in the field—Osgood and Adams among them—but Wilson seemed to have come at his conclusions by the less familiar and dustier road of jurisprudence and politics. In any event, the new ideas made him a vigorous and pungent critic of much of the historical and political writing of the times. They are bed-rock convictions which will be found highly illuminating in an approach to an understanding of his course in the later years. There are, in his view, no absolutely new ideas, no successful sudden revolutions, no

[1] *An Old Master*, p. 31.

[2] "The Significance of American History," Preface to Vol. I of Harper's Encyclopædia of American History, published December 3, 1901.

miracles of social invention—but always slow, steady progress out of the old into the new.

"We are in fact but living an old life under new conditions."[1]

Hence the profound importance of a knowledge of the old—of history.

It was with these historical convictions that Wilson came to the writing of his first historical work, *Division and Reunion*, one of the "Epoch" series, edited by Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University. It was to cover the period from 1829 to 1889, from Jackson through the bitter years of the slavery controversy, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. At that time, owing to the fierce sectional prejudices which still survived, the period was one of the most difficult to present objectively. It is significant not only of Professor Hart's acumen, but of the impression of dependable scholarship which Wilson had made upon the academic world that he, Southern born, should have been chosen by a Northern editor to write it.

The book represented an immense amount of toil—mostly during vacations.

". . . . I am spending this summer 'vacation,' as I spent the last, writing the 'Epoch' of American history, 1829–1889, for the series of the Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co. which Hart, of Harvard, is editing. It will take every bit of my time, from now till the moment I *must* seek a few days' relaxation before our college term opens, to finish it—as it took all last Summer to write the first half of it."[2]

It remains undoubtedly the best of his historical writings, perhaps still the best brief account of the period considered—an eminently fair, clear, sure treatment of

[1]Review of Bryce *American Commonwealth. The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 174.

[2]Letter to Horace Scudder, August 11, 1892.

national problems of supreme difficulty. It has had and continues to have a wide sale, and has been extensively used as a textbook. What a preparation were such studies of the causes and course of one great war for a President who was to deal with another and greater war!

It is not too much to say that Wilson in this volume "set up a school of historical thought" regarding the Civil War "which has long since become orthodox."[1] He contended that the American nation was not really born until the close of the Civil War; until the problem of the relationships of states to federal government was finally decided.

"The South was right in law and constitution, but wrong in history. The East, on the other hand, was wrong in law and constitution but right in history."

Wilson was to arrive at one other extremely important historical conviction, largely as a result of the studies of Professor Frederick J. Turner of Wisconsin, whose epoch-making address, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," was delivered in 1893. Wilson had known Turner at Johns Hopkins, and they had talked much of American historical tendencies. ". . . both were men of independent thought, a very rare thing in historians."[2]

"I formed a deep admiration for Mr. Wilson while I was a student, and he a lecturer at Johns Hopkins University about 1888–9, and he sometimes visited me at Madison when in the West. We boarded at the same house in Baltimore; and Professor Haskins, now of Harvard, was one of the group. Mr. Wilson talked with us of his plans and of his hopes. . . . He was a fascinating companion."[3]

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[1] William E. Dodd, *Woodrow Wilson and His Work*, p. 28.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[3] Professor Frederick J. Turner to the author.

Turner's theory of the influence of the pioneer and the moving frontier upon our life corresponded accurately with Wilson's idea of history as a life, a movement, a spirit, dominated less by mechanism than by the more intangible activities of men.

"You remember, I suppose, our talks in Baltimore on the growth of the national idea, and of nationality, in our history, and our agreement that the rôle of the west in this development was a very great, a leading, rôle, though much neglected by our historians? Well, of course I want to bring out this growth as emphatically as possible in what I shall write, and I want especially to form and express a right judgment as to the contribution of the West."[1]

Wilson had always been opposed, also, to the "expansion of New England" theory of American development, for it left out of view the large contributions of the South and the Middle settlements.[2]

Turner's address, which he read aloud to Wilson before it was delivered, made a deep impression upon him.

"Turner and I were close friends. He talked with me a great deal about his idea. All I ever wrote on the subject came from him. No, it was in no sense a discovery of mine."[3]

Wilson referred to the address in several of his articles and speeches of that year, and in December, 1896, he discussed a paper by Turner on "The West as a Field for Historical Study" at a meeting of the American Historical Association. We find evidences of the influence of Turner's paper in such addresses as "The Course of American History"[4] delivered on May 16, 1895, in Newark, New

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Professor Frederick J. Turner, August 23, 1889.

[2]See his sharp criticism of Goldwin Smith.

[3]Woodrow Wilson to Professor William E. Dodd.

[4]See *Mere Literature*, p. 225.

Jersey, and also in his article, "The Making of the Nation,"[1] in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July, 1897.[2]

All of these influences, these intellectual convictions, entered into his historical work. When he wrote his *George Washington*, which he undertook upon the suggestion of Henry M. Alden of *Harper's Magazine*, he treated his hero more as a great Englishman than as a distinctive American. The book is a biographical essay rather than a true biography, though it lacks the shrewd criticism which marks some of Wilson's lesser essays. It is too much a eulogy.[3]

A History of the American People, to which Wilson devoted the hardest labour, at the end of his professorial years at Princeton, while it has not met the test of later historical criticism, was at the time much welcomed and approved. Its wide popular publication and reading did much, no doubt, to spread modern American historical conceptions. But "we seem to be getting not history, but what Woodrow Wilson thought about history."[4]

If Wilson's history does not meet the full approval of historians, it has outlasted in public esteem many another history, less vividly written. It had a wide popular reading as a magazine serial,[5] and has run through numer-

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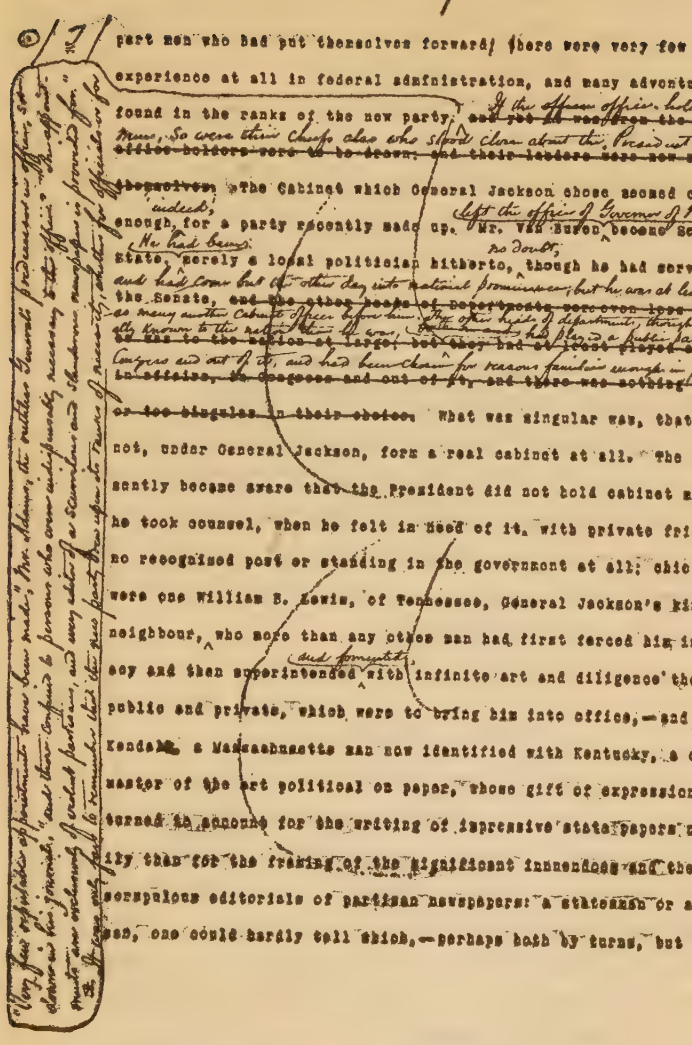
[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 310–335.

[2] See Woodrow Wilson on the influence of the frontier, *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 425–426.

[3] The *George Washington* at the time was most favourably received and greatly enhanced Wilson's reputation. It was the occasion for the first "Wilson dinner" when some thirty members of the class of '79 went to Princeton "to honour 'Tommy' Wilson and present him with a fine bust of George Washington."

[4] Professor John Spencer Bassett to the author.

[5] An amusing story is told of the business arrangements connected with the History. Wilson thought he was to receive $1,000 for each of two "parts" of the serial (see Henry M. Alden's letter to him, January 9, 1900), the parts to consist of six chapters each. After the completion of the first chapter he received, to his astonishment, a check for $1,000. He sent it back, saying that a mistake had been made. It was promptly returned to him with the information that he was to be paid $1,000 for each *chapter*, not each part. He was to receive $12,000 instead of $2,000. He and Mrs. Wilson immediately planned a trip to Europe.



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part men who had put themselves forward; there were very few men of any experience at all in federal administration, and many adventurers, to be found in the ranks of the new party. If the offices, holders were now men, so were their chiefs also who stood close about the President himself. The Cabinet which General Jackson chose seemed conventional enough, indeed, for a party recently made up. Mr. Van Buren left the office of Governor of New York to become Secretary of State. He had been, merely a local politician hitherto, no doubt, though he had served a term in the Senate, and had come but the other day into national prominence; but he was at least as well known as many another Cabinet officer before him. The other heads of departments, though even less generally known to the nation there of war, [illegible] had played a public part in affairs, in Congress and out of it, and had been chosen for reasons familiar enough in politics. What was singular was, that they did not, under General Jackson, form a real cabinet at all. The country presently became aware that the President did not hold cabinet meetings: that he took counsel, when he felt in need of it, with private friends who had no recognized post or standing in the government at all; chief among whom were one William B. Lewis, of Tennessee, General Jackson's kinsman and neighbour, who more than any other man had first forced him into candidacy and then superintended and fomented, with infinite art and diligence the influences, public and private, which were to bring him into office, — and one Amos Kendall, a Massachusetts man now identified with Kentucky, a consummate master of the art political on paper, whose gift of expression could be turned to account for the writing of impressive state papers no less readily than for the framing of the significant innuendoes and the biting, unscrupulous editorials of partisan newspapers: a statesman or a mere partisan, one could hardly tell which, — perhaps both by turns, but nothing out

Page of Woodrow Wilson's original manuscript, showing interlineation in his own handwriting. The matter itself is interesting since it treats of President Jackson's choice of a cabinet and advisers.

ous editions as a book. It has been translated into several foreign languages. All of Wilson's political and historical works are still very much alive.

Most of Wilson's historical writing was done during the later years of his professorship at Princeton, done under heavy pressure, and often during ill health. He turned to it with the fiercer persistence because, as has been pointed out, he was beginning, after 1896, to find less and less hope of the realization of his visions either in public life or in the reconstruction of Princeton University. His standards of work being exceedingly high, he toiled relentlessly through vacations as well as during every spare hour of his crowded days as a professor. He was also lecturing widely. We find, as we should expect to find, in such devotion by sheer will power to tasks that were not of primary interest to the soul of the man, many evidences of weariness, even disgust, not only with the result of his work, but with the work itself.

"I've carried out my programme for the 'vacation', and am now nearing the end of that wretched little 'Epoch'—at least of the first draft of it."[1]

Talk, talk!—when he wanted action, affairs. It was a great relief to him when the election to the presidency of Princeton came. It ended his literary work. He never afterward wrote a book; though books were made up from his addresses, articles, and messages. There were times when he had moments of longing for the freedom of the "man of letters," but they were rare. He had entered the world of men and events.

[1]Letter to Robert Bridges, August 18, 1892.

CHAPTER XV

PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

We are not put into this world to sit still and know; we are put into it to act.

Inaugural address as president of Princeton University, October 25, 1902.

Books can but set the mind free, can but give it the freedom of the world of thought. The world of affairs has yet to be attempted, and the schooling of action must supplement the schooling of the written page.

Address delivered on the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle of Trenton, December 26, 1901.

A new age is before us, in which, it would seem, we must lead the world.

Inaugural address as president of Princeton University, October 25, 1902.

I. ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY OF PRINCETON

WOODROW WILSON was elected to the presidency of Princeton University on June 9, 1902. It came "like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky." No one in the college community had any inkling of it in advance.

It was during the annual Commencement celebration, the height of the college year, and the campus was thronged with alumni. Whisperings of a crisis in university affairs had brought together an unusually large attendance of the Board of Trustees for the Commencement meeting. Grover Cleveland, then a new trustee, a figure of distinction and solidity, was in attendance for the first time.

President Patton rose to speak. A brilliant man with a

ready wit, his remarks on that day were "plain and forcible." He presented his resignation—he had served fourteen years, he wished now to retire—and he suggested Woodrow Wilson as his successor. John A. Stewart, senior member of the Board, promptly nominated Wilson and asked for his immediate election.

It was in every way an astonishing procedure. While there had been informal discussion on the part of a few of the trustees, led by David B. Jones, there had been no general consultation whatever, no suggestion of any other name, no consideration of the fact that they were breaking a tradition as ancient as the university itself that its president should be an ordained minister. But they all knew Wilson; and when the vote was put, it carried unanimously. The result seems to have surprised the trustees themselves.

"I never saw so many men of many minds unite so promptly, without debate, without hesitation at the mere mention of a name. When the ballot was taken I thought that there might be one or two blanks; but every man had promptly cast his ballot without consultation, and when the vote was announced we agreed that it was the act of Providence."[1]

Immediately a committee was appointed consisting of President Patton and the three trustees who were Wilson's devoted classmates of '79—Dodge, McCormick, and Cuyler—to notify the new president. They found him at his home and brought him triumphantly back with them to receive the felicitations of the Board. He had been taken completely by surprise; but he accepted the presidency in the same spirit of spontaneity in which it was offered.

It is characteristic of Wilson that, as soon as he was free, he should think first, after his own family, of his dearest friends, the Hibbens, and Stockton Axson. The Hibbens

[1]Letter from S. Bayard Dod to Woodrow Wilson, June 25, 1902.

were giving a Commencement reception, but Wilson came in with his eyes glowing to take his friends into his confidence.[1]

The news spread like wildfire. A group of alumni and students escorted the new president to the steps of Old Nassau where he was vociferously cheered and called upon to speak. On the following day, at the crowded alumni luncheon, he was formally introduced by Dr. Patton—an occasion of unprecedented enthusiasm.

"How can a man who loves this place as I love it realize of a sudden that he now has the liberty to devote every power that is in him to its service?"

The reaction in the outside world was scarcely less remarkable. New York and Philadelphia newspapers were full of the events connected with the sudden overturn, conjectures as to the reasons for it, and comments on the choice of a layman for the chair of such famous divines as John Witherspoon, Aaron Burr the elder, Jonathan Edwards, and James McCosh. The chorus of praise for the new choice was unmarred by a single discordant note.

"The new president is a man of distinction. His political writings have made him already well known to the country as a man capable of clear, straightforward thinking upon the problems of government, while his career as an educator testifies to his fitness for the new responsibility. The duty of the college graduate to take part in public affairs is a trite theme of the orator and the essayist. President Wilson's influence upon the undergraduate body at Princeton should be in a high degree favourable to the working out of that ideal. Under his direction a new life, a higher fame, and a greater usefulness to the youth of the Nation and to the Nation itself await the university."[2]

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[1]President John Grier Hibben to the author.

[2]Editorial from the New York *Times*, June 11, 1902.

One of the interesting incidents connected with the election was the joy expressed by Southern newspapers. "A Southerner to preside over a great Northern school."[1] "The people of Virginia are proud of the distinguished compliment . . . he is a Virginian through and through."[2] Well might Wilson's friend, Edward Ingle, who sent him a collection of these editorials, remark in his letter:

"How Homer would envy you!"

Mrs. Wilson gives a vivid glimpse of the enthusiasm in a letter to her cousin, Florence Hoyt:

"The letters and the newspapers are both wonderful. . . . As for the Professors, students and Princeton people generally,—well, the scenes here were indescribable! It is enough to frighten a man to death to have people love and believe in him so and *expect* so much. Yet on the other hand it is like going in with the tide; he is only the leader of the Princeton forces and all this enthusiasm will surely be a strong power impelling the University forward. Of course you know he was unanimously elected on the first ballot,—something unique in college history. One of the Trustees told me that 'those 26 men had never agreed on *any*thing in their lives before, yet in this they were *perfectly* unanimous from the *first*, no other name was ever proposed.' . . . Wasn't it wonderful, especially when one thinks that Woodrow made no more effort to get it than *you* did!"[3]

Behind the rejoicing lay deep the feeling amongst those who knew and loved Princeton that the institution had ceased making progress under the leadership of President Patton; and that, with Wilson in command, it would at once take on new life. When new plans were made, like those for a graduate school, in 1896, years drifted by with

[1] The Charlotte *Observer*, June 12, 1902.

[2] The Richmond *Times*, June 11, 1902.

[3] June 28, 1902.

nothing done. It was difficult to attract strong men to the university, or having them there, to keep them. Wilson himself, tempted by glittering offers, had more than once been at the point of leaving.

By 1901, the spirit of unrest had reached open revolt. Professor William Magie headed a movement for a committee to investigate the scholastic condition of the college and to recommend reforms. A great debate began in the faculty with Patton leading the element opposed to change. Wilson took little part in it: he felt that anything less than a radical reform from top to bottom would accomplish nothing.[1]

Matters went from bad to worse. In March, 1902, the Board of Trustees found it necessary to take the matter in hand, and an executive committee of three members of the faculty and two trustees, to control the university, was proposed. When Patton was informed of the movement, he asked immediately:

"Will the president be a member of the executive committee?"

It was the beginning of the end. Three members of the faculty, Wilson, Fine, and Brackett, were requested to draw up a confidential report as to the functioning of the proposed committee; but Patton's resignation solved every problem.

Wilson responded to the new appointment with all the ardour and intensity of his nature. It was, at length, an opportunity to act, to lead, to construct. Seventeen years he had been in a "talking profession." "Secondary successes!" He was now to step out into a new field of men and affairs.

He could scarcely wait to begin the new work. Although at the end of an exhausting college year, with a huge pile of the book proofs of his *History of the American People*

[1]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

upon his desk, he began at once to work upon his inaugural address. It was not to be delivered until October, but he must "clear his mind," "write his creed."

Mrs. Wilson had gone to visit her old friends, the Tedcastles, in Boston, and he sat in his quiet study at Princeton—as quiet as only a professor's study in mid-vacation can be—and forged his educational thunder-bolts. He wrote to his wife on July 19th:

"Fortunately, I never worked out the argument on liberal studies, which is the theme of my inaugural, before, never before having treated myself as a professional 'educator,' and so the matter is not stale but fresh and interesting. I am quite straightening out my ideas!—and that amuses me. I feel like a new prime minister getting ready to address his constituents. I trust I shall seem less like a philosophical dreamer than Mr. Balfour does."

Here speaks the true Wilson. He is content, for he feels like a prime minister! After so many hard, dry years he can quaff at length the cup of joyful fulfilment.

"I often marvel at the circumstances of my life, there has been so much sweetness and unmarred good fortune in it, so much love and deep content, so much quiet delight. I thank God from the bottom of my heart! I have been so trusted and loved and honoured. It is marvellous. What deep ingratitude it would be should I repine or fret at anything."[1]

His letters of the time are full of expressions of his joy, of thankfulness for the devotion of his friends, especially those of his own class of '79.

"It delights me more than I can say to have such support and endorsement from you and the other '79 men who stand so close to me."[2]

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 20, 1902.

[2]Letter to Cleveland H. Dodge, June 17, 1902.

And he writes to an old friend of the Bryn Mawr years: "It does me more good than I can say to know that the men who have been closest to me are the men that believe in me, and in my capacity to undertake the great task to which I have been appointed. . . ."[1]

There are, however, sharp twinges of regret. His great work on politics, his "Novum Organon," and the journey to Europe to gather materials for it, must be delayed.

"You need give yourself no concern about the History. It was finished a couple of weeks ago (no,—one week ago) and my desks are clear; and, as for my health, that is firm and excellent. No doubt I shall have to give up writing for the next three or four years, and that is a heartbreaking thing for a fellow who has not yet written the particular thing for which he has been training all his life; but when I can tell you the circumstances I am sure that you will say that it was my duty to accept. It was a singularly plain, a *blessedly* plain, case."[2]

Mrs. Wilson, moreover, dreads the change, and while glorying in the new honours heaped upon her husband, regrets that his career as a "man of letters" is to be threatened:

"Of course it involves heavy sacrifices to people of our temperament. His literary work must suffer greatly,—just how much remains to be seen, and we must leave our dear home and the sweet, almost ideal life when he was a simple 'man of letters' and go and live in that great, stately, troublesome 'Prospect,' and be forever giving huge receptions, state dinners, etc. etc. We are both rather heart-broken about this side of it, but I am trying now not to let my mind dwell on it. All these new duties and responsibilities it is 'up to me' as the boys say to fulfil to

[1]Letter to Professor E. Washburn Hopkins, June 17, 1902.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to Mrs. Edith G. Reid, July 12, 1902.

the best of my ability, & I must 'brook no continuance of weakmindedness.'"[1]

How little she knew then that the "great, stately, troublesome 'Prospect,'" was to be succeeded by the great, stately, troublesome White House, and her man of letters was to write no more books.

His service as president of Princeton began on August 1, 1902, and the very next day, having cleared his desk of all the accumulated letters of congratulation, the proofs of his book, and his inaugural address, he rushes away to the Tedcastles for a vacation.

". . . that was the first use I made of my privileges," he wrote to his loyal friend David B. Jones. "Such is the force of precedent with men of our race."[2]

It was one of the happiest and gayest vacations of his entire life. He kept the Tedcastles and all their friends in a "storm of laughter and merriment."[3] He visited with his old friend Dabney in Boston, and had long and delightful talks with him, and he met, quite unceremoniously, Professor Münsterberg of Harvard University.

"An amusing thing happened when I went to the station for my mail at noon. Prof. Münsterberg, of Harvard, who has a cottage here, came in while I was there, and the station master, seeing that we did not speak, came promptly out of his little office and, saying 'You gentlemen ought to know one another,' cheerily introduced us!"[4]

He observes that "Münsterberg is thoroughly well worth knowing." Afterward he spends a week or so of carefree vacation with the Hibbens and Wescotts in New Hampshire and later goes to North East Harbor, Maine, and enjoys intensely a fishing trip on the ocean.

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[1]Letter from Mrs. Wilson to Miss Florence Hoyt, June 28, 1902.

[2]August 11, 1902.

[3]Mrs. Arthur W. Tedcastle to the author.

[4]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, August 8, 1902.

"PROSPECT," THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE ON THE CAMPUS AT PRINCETON WHERE WOODROW WILSON LIVED DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE AS PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON

"Yesterday we put on old clothes (I put on a suit of Morgan's!) and went out some six or seven miles to fish for cod. The party consisted of Morgan, Harry Osborn, Pyne, Hutton,[1] and myself. I caught nothing, but the sail and the fine air of the open sea were delightful,—the party most congenial and interesting. We had a jolly, boyish time, took a picnic lunch on the boat, and did not get back till a little after four o'clock."[2]

But the new work is never far from his thoughts. Now that he has worked out the principles and policies which are to govern his administration, his mind races eagerly to the consideration of practical ways and means. What a delight it is to plan with some prospect of bringing the plans to fruition!

"I think a good deal about College affairs these quiet hours, but not to fatigue. The right to *plan* is so novel, the element of vexation, the sense of helplessness we had for so long, is so entirely removed, that it is a pleasure to think out the work that is to be done. If it did not have the incalculable money element in it, there would be no touch of worry about any of it."[3]

He writes to David B. Jones:

"I feel the weight of the responsibility that has come upon me, and feel it very solemnly; but I am glad to say that I do not feel it as a burden. I am glad to give all that is in me to the task now to be undertaken. There is a vast deal to be done, and it is impossible yet to plan it wisely all the way through. It will be wisest to make our general purpose distinct to ourselves, and the outline of the means by which we mean to seek its attainment, and then attack the details one at a time. I find the outlines forming in my mind with a good deal of definiteness

[1] Junius S. Morgan, Professor Henry F. Osborn, M. Taylor Pyne, Lawrence Hutton.
[2] Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, August 17, 1902.
[3] *Ibid.*, August 6, 1902.

and certainty. In fact we have so long talked them over in a little circle in Princeton that they are easily to be compounded out of common counsel. Hitherto they have been in our minds as a sort of abstract thesis; now, if men with money are generous to us, they may come into shape as real achievements."[1]

He can say with vivid self-interpretation, as a summation of the entire matter:

"I find, now that I get a certain remove, that my election to the presidency has done a very helpful thing for me. It has settled the future for me and given me a sense of *position* and of definite, tangible tasks which takes the *flutter* and restlessness from my spirits."[2]

September 1st sees Wilson back in Princeton, ardently taking up his new work. Crowded and exciting weeks. The university is at its opening and he is the new president. He must prepare his first report to the trustees; he must consider the practical aspects of the reforms he is to set forth in his inaugural.

He speaks before the Philadelphian Society, the students' religious organization, on September 20th:

"We love the place and expect you to love it. . . . Here a man frees his powers and strips his prejudices away. . . . *Every*thing should enter into a man's religion."

Great and beautiful days! On October 25th came the inaugural celebration for the new president—the "most dignified and impressive of its kind ever presented."[1] Three days later, Wilson's *History of the American People* was published, with broadsides of approval based upon its serial appearance. Surely it was a time of crowding honours, the evidences of successful achievement.

A committee of forty alumni had worked upon the plans of the inaugural celebration since July. Friday evening,

[1]August 11, 1902.

[2]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, August 10, 1902.

October 24th, the "staid town of Princeton was alive with decorous excitement," and the morning of Saturday, the 25th, dawned bright and clear, a perfect autumn day. Princeton was attired in her finest, with banners floating from turrets and towers above the gorgeous autumn treetops. Such were the crowds and such the receptions, teas, dinners, reunions, that "extra carriages had to be imported from Trenton!"

It was a resplendent procession that filed slowly through the noble arches of the university library on that Saturday morning. Never, perhaps, in America had there been a more distinguished gathering of celebrities for a college ceremonial. The greatest educators were there, the most celebrated authors, distinguished statesmen, notable figures in the world of industry and finance. At the head of the procession marched, in academic cap and gown, the dignified figure of Grover Cleveland, side by side with Governor Murphy of New Jersey.

Woodrow Wilson, "slim, erect, keen-faced," came next with the Chancellor of the State, and then the former president, Dr. Patton, accompanied by Dr. Henry van Dyke.

More than a hundred colleges and universities were represented in the stately procession, capped and gowned in academic dignity—those in the scarlet of Oxford University the most radiant of all. A number of women presidents and deans added a touch of the unusual, and a much noted figure was the Negro leader, Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute. Hadley of Yale, Butler of Columbia, Harper of Chicago, Remsen of Johns Hopkins, Professor Lowell representing Harvard—they were all there.

Marching behind the academic notables was a group of "men whose names were on every tongue." One easily singled out the portly figure of Thomas B. Reed, then

Speaker of the House of Representatives, and J. Pierpont Morgan, who had come, much heralded, in a special train from New York. Mark Twain's erect form and snowy mane were conspicuous, and the art of letters was further represented by Edmund Clarence Stedman, William Dean Howells, and Richard Watson Gilder. Robert T. Lincoln was a distinguished guest, and several of the men who were afterward to play such a part in Wilson's career were there, among them George Harvey and Walter H. Page. Only an accident prevented the attendance of Theodore Roosevelt, then President of the United States.

"That Booker T. Washington was present so scandalized an unreconstructed aunt of ours that she said that if she had known he was to be there she wouldn't have come (which scandalized us) and Father said that Booker T's speech was the very best at the dinner afterwards, bar none. 'Not than yours, Father.' 'Oh, yes, no comparison between them.' Our incredulous 'Oh's' and mother's sweet smile equally incredulous."[1]

The greater part of the stately procession was made up of the trustees, faculty, and alumni of Princeton University. Foremost among these was "Woodrow Wilson's Class of '79," old friends who were there in force to celebrate the "coronation of Tommy Wilson."

So they came at length to Alexander Hall with the Governor of New Jersey presiding, Grover Cleveland on his right, Woodrow Wilson on his left. We hear the strains of the Latin hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus," and the invocation by Dr. van Dyke craving from the Almighty the gift of "length of days and strength of spirit" for the new president. We see the distinguished Chancellor Magie of New Jersey rising to propound the ancient and solemn oath. An "impressive ceremony" indeed to which the new president "made his responses as if he meant them to

[1]Mrs. Sayre to the author.

serve for more than a quaint bit of symbolism." And finally, having received with due ceremony the historic Witherspoon key, he became the thirteenth president of Princeton University.

Great speaking there was on that day—Dr. Patton, "dry, pungent, witty"; Grover Cleveland, "a surprise," for "one had not thought of him as an expert in . . . education"; and finally the noble address of the "hero of the day": "Princeton for the Nation's Service."

Wilson's address made a profound impression. "Through every sentence of it the honest man spoke forth." It was not, possibly, as powerful and original an outpouring as that delivered during the Sesquicentennial celebration, six years before. It was great enough! It contained the educational creed of the new leader. It sounded the keynote of his educational policy. All the thinking of a dozen years was in it. Its central ideal was expressed in its title: the university must serve the state.

"In planning for Princeton . . . we are planning for the country. The service of institutions of learning is not private, but public. It is plain what the nation needs as its affairs grow more and more complex and its interests begin to touch the ends of the earth. It needs efficient and enlightened men. The universities of the country must take part in supplying them."[1]

In order to serve the state, it must have unity of purpose, must "deal with the spirits of men, not with their fortunes."

"We must not lose sight of that fine conception of a general training which led our fathers, in the days when men knew how to build great states, to build great colleges also to sustain them."[2]

It was an address full of the power and inspiration of great vision.

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 443.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 448.

Such was the great event of the day. There were many lesser ones, scattering like sparks after the rocket is spent. The new president was caught up immediately after the celebration and delivered a less formal, but more intimate, talk from Old North, to the cheering friends who crowded upon him:

"I have come from a place where I have been telling them what the ideals of Princeton are. The ideals of Princeton are contained in the men whom Princeton sends out, and I take it that the men who have been associated in the class comradeships in this place know the plan for this place. . . . I ask that you will look upon me not as a man to do something apart, but as a man who asks the privilege of leading you and being believed in by you while he tries to do the things in which he knows you believe."

He was then called upon to turn the sod, using a silver spade, for the new building in process of erection by the class of '79, and soon afterward he gave his first "state luncheon" at Prospect to a distinguished company. In the evening, there was a heart-warming dinner of his own devoted class, at which, after midnight, Wilson made the "best speech of all."

One figure of that supreme day must not be forgotten: an old man, a "beautiful old man," the hero of the new president's life, Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, watching the culmination of a career in which he had from the beginning felt an abiding confidence. He was there "casting the benediction of his presence upon the family circle. . . ."[1] But he was not to be there for long. He had suffered much recently from illness, and nothing so comforted him in the latter days of his life as the companionship of his son. "We would hear father singing to him across the hall, 'Crown Him with Many Crowns' and other favourites of his."[2] Three

[1]Letter from President Daniel Coit Gilman to Mr. Wilson, November 2, 1902.

[2]Mrs. Francis B. Sayre to the author.

months after Wilson's installation, on January 21, 1903, the old minister passed away.

Wilson's address and the distinction of his inauguration added greatly to his own prestige and to that of Princeton. Here was a leader—a leader who could think, who could speak, who could create. The response was widespread and gratifying. The New York *Evening Post* referred to the address as "distinguished both for breadth of philosophic vision and for grace of literary form"; and Dr. Parkhurst used it as the text for a sermon. In December, such was the enthusiasm of the alumni that they gave a dinner to Wilson at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, attended by six hundred and fifteen guests—the largest alumni dinner ever held, up to that time, in America.

We have a vivid picture of the man, written by a friend at the time:

"A man of medium height, neither athletic nor anæmic, neither rotund nor spare; full of nerve, but not nervous; not handsome, but with a face one wants to look at twice and thrice; a scholar who has no stoop; a man more than a don; honest to the core, zealous with chastened enthusiasm; sincerely religious, yet with no vocabulary of cant; very popular with the students, and deservedly so; a proved success as a student, writer, public speaker and professor, and a probable success as a president; conservative as to essentials and progressive in adaptations; a thinker with an outlook, an opportunity, a message, and a vision; conversant with great structural principles and alert for details; a man with a past, and, Providence permitting, a man with a future."

II. WILSON'S VISION OF A NEW UNIVERSITY

Men recognize genius in no other field as instinctively, as conclusively, as in the field of leadership. They are eager to crown it with power and responsibility, eager

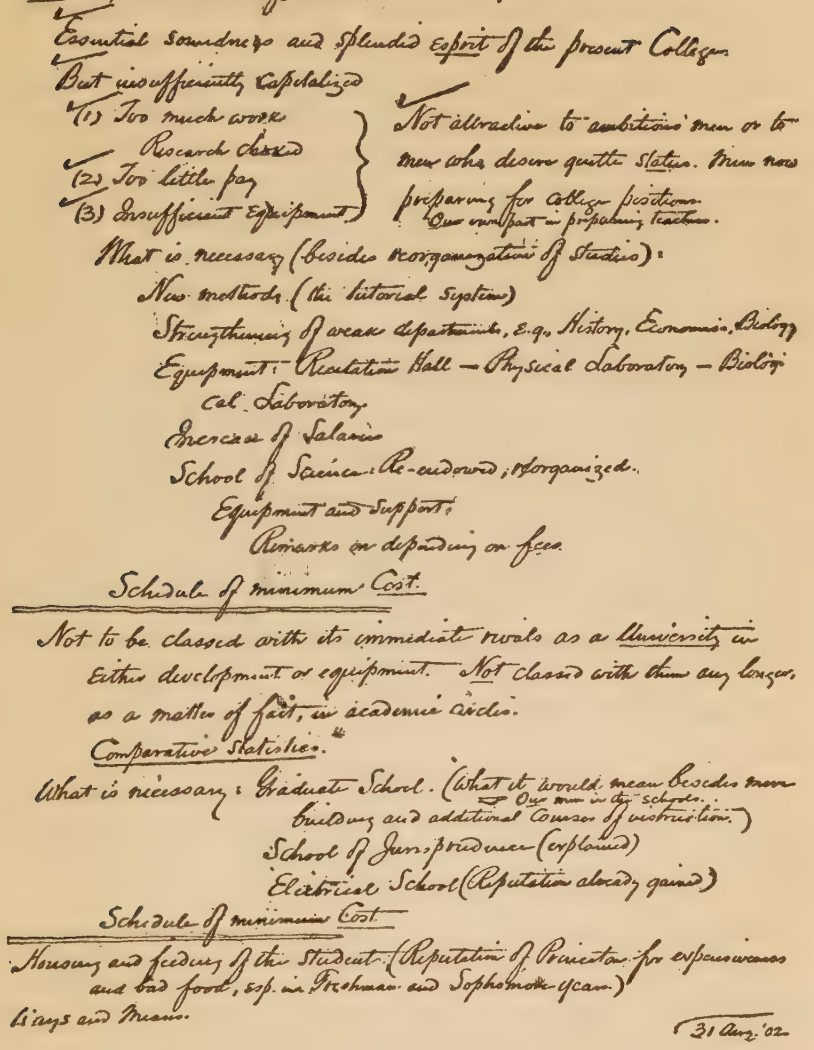
themselves to follow. Wilson was not only elected president by the unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees, but at the first meeting that followed, October 21, 1902—four days before his inauguration—sweeping powers were placed in his hands. It is significant that Grover Cleveland himself, a shrewd judge of men, made the motion which authorized the new president to "create such vacancies in the teaching force as he may deem for the best interests of the university."[1] And in the following spring Wilson was made responsible for the entire reorganization of the faculty.[2] During the first five years of his presidency, no executive ever had more thorough-going and devoted support than Woodrow Wilson. The trustees even asked the assistance of their new president, in a later year, in reorganizing their own Board, and they welcomed his suggestions for new appointees.

Such "responsible leadership" accorded wholly with Wilson's fundamental ideas of government. Education was "minor statesmanship"; the college a little state. Give your prime minister wide powers; do not restrict his initiative with feeble checks and balances; do not hamper him with committees. The remedy for failure was simple: "If you do not like your prime minister, change him."

Wilson himself, though without previous experience as an administrator, seems never for a moment to have had a doubt as to what to do or how to do it. His programme lay crystal clear in his mind: he never hesitated for an instant in his plans for carrying it out. And it is a beautiful thing, as one studies the voluminous letters, documents, reports, and written articles of that time, to see a noble institution with its ancient traditions, its wealth of what

[1] Minutes of the Board of Trustees.

[2] Meeting of June 8, 1903.


Memo Report to Board of Trustees, October, 1902

Essential soundness and splendid esprit of the present College.

But inadequately capitalized

(1) Too much work — Research checked

(2) Too little pay

(3) Insufficient Equipment

} Not attractive to ambitious men or to men who desire quatre status. Men now preparing for college positions. Our own part in preparing teachers.

What is necessary (besides reorganization of Studies):

New methods (the tutorial system)

Strengthening of weak departments, e.g. History, Economics, Biology

Equipment: Recitation Hall — Physical Laboratory — Biological Laboratory

Increase of Salaries

School of Science: Re-endowed, reorganized.

Equipment and Support:

Remarks on dependency on fees.

Schedule of minimum Cost.

Not to be classed with its immediate rivals as a University in either development or equipment. Not classed with them any longer, as a matter of fact, in academic circles.

Comparative Statistics.

What is necessary: Graduate School. (What it would mean besides more buildings and additional Courses of instruction. = One man in the school.)

School of Jurisprudence (explained)

Electrical School (Reputation already gained)

Schedule of minimum Cost

Housing and feeding of the Students (Reputation of Princeton for expensiveness and bad food, esp. in Freshman and Sophomore years.)

Ways and Means.

31 Aug. '02

Wilson notes for his first report as president of Princeton University to his Board of Trustees. He always worked out the notes for his addresses and reports with painstaking care.

Wilson called "untamed power," take fire at the kindling of one great spirit.

His audacity was as irresistible as it was infectious. His first report must have taken away the breath of some, at least, of the conservative older members of the Board. After showing that the entire productive resources of the university were less than $4,000,000, the slow accretions of a century, he calmly outlined a programme that would require three times as much more, in short, more than $12,000,000. It was in the time before university "drives" had accustomed the public mind to thinking in terms of such vast sums for educational purposes, a time, moreover, when the country was not in a wholly cheerful financial condition—and this new president was asking $12,000,000! Yet he had the best of reasons. Princeton had been slipping behind: it must be brought vigorously forward.

"No institution can have freedom in its development which does not stand at the top in a place of real leadership."[1]

Princeton must challenge the supremacy of Harvard and Yale.

"Either we may withdraw from tne university competition and devote ourselves to making what we have solid and distinguished, or we must find money enough to make Princeton in fact a great university."[2]

He asks therefore, as a pressing immediate necessity, for $6,000,000. Of this, $2,250,000 is for the new preceptorial system he desires to create—"fifty tutors at $45,000 each"—a million dollars is for a school of science; and various buildings and increases in staff will amount to $2,750,000 more.

Beyond these immediate needs he asks for $6,650,000 with which to "create a real university."

[1]President's Report, October 21, 1902.

[2]*Ibid.*

Graduate School	$3,000,000
School of Jurisprudence	2,400,000
Electrical Engineering School	750,000
Museum of Natural History	500,000
	$6,650,000

A remarkable report indeed. A report calculated to startle men into action. Hard-headed men shake their heads and doubt, but here is a leader who believes utterly in the validity of his vision. He carries his fight at once, and with eager jauntiness, into the very camp of the conservatives—in New York. On December 9th, he makes his great address at the Princeton dinner in the Waldorf-Astoria.[1]

"Gentlemen, we have dreamed a dream in Princeton...."

A dream of beautiful buildings, great new schools, knit together by "a spirit which is touched with the ideals of service"! Scholars and students must be brought into close association, master and pupil must mingle in quadrangles, one of them at least "more beautiful than any that has yet been built."[2] Every student in this inspiring environment shall be "bent upon the errands of the mind."

"All of that, gentlemen, costs money."

When he tells them that the preceptorial system alone will "need two millions and a quarter," the reporter of the speech remarks drily in parentheses:

"Whistles from the audience."

And well may they whistle! But the new president comes back with the kind of response beloved of strong men:

"I hope you will get your whistling over, because you will have to get used to this, and you may thank your stars I did not say four millions and a quarter, because we are going to get it. [Applause.] I suspect there are gentlemen in

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 462–473.

[2] He was referring here to the graduate college quadrangle.

this room who are going to give me two millions and a quarter to get rid of me. They will be able to get rid of me in no other way that I know of. And then, gentlemen, in order to do these other things which I have dreamed of, we shall need a great deal more than two millions and a quarter. I have not guessed at any figure that I have uttered. I have calculated upon a basis that I think in business would be recognized as a sound basis, every cent that I have estimated that Princeton will need and the total is twelve millions and a half." [Applause.]

The sheer audacity of the man! Yet he sets their hearts to beating faster, he opens their eyes to an undiscovered country; he asks of them great, hard, new, beautiful things —duty and service, not mere satisfaction.

"Now why do all of this? Why not be satisfied with the happy life at Princeton? Why not congratulate ourselves upon the comradeship of a scene like this, and say, 'This is enough, what could the heart of man desire more?' Because, gentlemen, what this country needs is not more good fellowship; what this country needs now more than it ever did before, what it shall need in the years following, is knowledge and enlightenment. Civilization grows infinitely complex about us; the tasks of this country are no longer simple; men are not doing their duty who have a chance to know and do not equip themselves with knowledge in the midst of the tasks which surround us. Princeton has ever since her birthday stood for the service of the nation."

Such a leader may indeed frighten timid souls; but he attracts the strong. One of the ablest men in the faculty, destined to become one of Wilson's bitter opponents, wrote to him:

"To want great things is the first step toward getting them."[1]

[1]Letter from Andrew F. West, November 29, 1902.

The reaction upon the faculty was instantaneous. Here was a leader who would fight their battles! Some of them, however, trembled when they saw the magnitude of Wilson's task:

"I tremble as I think of the house-cleaning that has been left for you to do."[1]

But they trusted him. In resolutions at the time of Patton's resignation, the attitude of the faculty is clearly set forth:

"The immediate accession of President Wilson, without a trace of friction in the process, has already been hailed with general approval in which the Faculty have special reason to join. We are welcoming to the Presidency, not merely a graduate with an enthusiastic following of the Alumni, not merely a scholar imbued with the Princeton spirit, but also a colleague who for ten years has shared our counsels and has been trained as one of ourselves in the service of his Alma Mater. . . .

"The Faculty have pleasure in assuring President Wilson of their cordial support and coöperation and look forward confidently to a new era of prosperity under his administration." [2]

A spirit of new faith and of high endeavour took hold of the entire institution:

"I cannot tell you with what a feeling of relief I look forward to the years to come. I feel as if my fighting days were over—not I hope my working days—but that I can now pursue the glorious arts of peace and do my duty without irritation of mind."[3]

Many of the teachers rewrote their lectures to bring them up to the measure of the new spirit,[4] and the faculty

[1]Letter from Andrew F. West, November 29, 1902.

[2]The committee signing the resolutions were: Charles W. Shields, Henry B. Cornwall, S. R. Winans, Alexander T. Ormond, Andrew F. West.

[3]Letter from W. F. Magie to Woodrow Wilson, August 13, 1902.

[4]Professor George M. Harper to the author.

began to come together to discuss the vital problems of the university as never before. There were many able men on the staff, but they had "lacked the consciousness of the university idea." New committees were constituted, and a new dean, Henry B. Fine, a firm supporter of Wilson's programme, was presently appointed. He was to become the backbone of Wilson's administration.

From the day the college opened in 1902, the student body knew that the university had "entered upon a new era." Something stimulating, something interesting, pervaded the very air of the place.

"I am not going to propose that we compel the undergraduates to work all the time, but I am going to propose that we make the undergraduates want to work all the time."[1]

Wilson loathed the old system of coaching for examinations, the mere memorizing of facts. He often related with relish the answer he once found on an examination paper: "This question is unfair. It requires thought."[2]

What he wanted was to "transform thoughtless boys performing tasks into thinking men."[3]

It was inevitable that this tightening-up process should result in many academic casualties, should react upon the parents, often the rich and powerful parents of students who considered the university a kind of "intellectual country club."[2]

"Not long ago a gentleman approached me in great excitement just after the entrance examinations. He said we had made a great mistake in not taking so and so from a certain school which he named. 'But,' I said, 'he did not pass the entrance examinations.' And he went over the

[1]Address at the Princeton dinner in New York, December 9, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 468.

[2]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[3]Address at the Princeton dinner in New York, December 9, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 467.

boy's moral excellencies again. 'Pardon me,' I said, 'you do not understand. He did not pass the entrance examinations. Now,' I said, 'I want you to understand that if the angel Gabriel applied for admission to Princeton University and could not pass the entrance examinations, he would not be admitted. He would be wasting his time.' It seemed a new idea to him. This boy had come from a school which cultivated character, and he was a nice lovable fellow with a presentable character. Therefore, he ought to be admitted to any university. I fail to see it from this point of view, for a university is an institution of purpose."[1]

Such a stern adherence to discipline also disturbed and alarmed the preparatory schools whose formula for "getting students by the examiners" was threatened. One of the masters made a trip to Princeton to see Wilson, and was thoroughly convinced. He wrote afterward that he believed Wilson to be "the greatest force I have seen for good in our work," and that if the new plans could be carried out it would not only put Princeton at the head of American colleges, but it would lift the whole body of instruction in preparatory schools. Princeton was now the great hope. "We all agree, we school teachers, that this is the man we can follow."[2]

Discipline was sharpened all along the line. The honour system was placed on a firmer foundation by the organization of a senior council, and there was less tolerance for the "amiable excesses" of an older time. Not long after the new administration began, several students were suspended for participation in a beer party. When Stockton Axson inquired what had happened, the president promptly retorted:

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[1]Address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale University.

[2]Letter from J. C. Croswell of the Brearley School to Cleveland H. Dodge, January 17, 1903.

"It has happened that there is going to be some discipline in this college."

"President Wilson was never a prohibitionist, but he did object to intemperance."[1]

On occasion, he could be adamant, and suffer from it afterward himself.

"A student had cheated and was to be expelled. His mother came to beg Cousin Woodrow to keep the boy in college.

"'I am to have an operation,' she said, 'and I think I shall die if my boy is expelled.'

"'Madam,' he answered, 'we cannot keep in college a boy reported by the student council as cheating; if we did, we should have no standard of honour. You force me to say a hard thing, but, if I had to choose between your life or my life or anybody's life and the good of this college, I should choose the good of the college.'

"'And,' said Ellen, 'he came from the interview so white and ill that he could eat no lunch.'"[2]

On the other hand, if the offence was due merely to high spirits, not dishonesty, he could handle it with a skill and tact that made him friends.

In the winter of 1903, a controversy arose as to whether Princeton should discontinue compulsory daily chapel. The president met the issue promptly by a statement given to the Associated Press:

"There is at present no thought here of abolishing compulsory chapel. It is one of the oldest customs of the place, is based on strong religious feeling, and has been found productive of good. Each day's exercises begin with a religious service, and it has been regarded of the essential tradition of the place to give this flavour to the day's appointments."

[1]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

[2]Miss Mary W. Hoyt to the author.

It was inevitable that such a new spirit of discipline should awaken alarm and resentment—especially when it finally reached into the faculty itself. Well might Wilson's friends tremble when they considered the house-cleaning he must do. One of the professors he "eliminated" was highly popular with the students, and a controversy in the press was narrowly averted; with another, a "mild little man," Wilson's method was so abrupt that there were sharp criticisms in the Nassau Club. He was "going too fast"; he was "too autocratic." When did the reformer bent upon his purposes with single-minded fervour ever escape such reactions? The marvel is that there were so few.

One result of the stricter enforcement of rules of scholarship and more vigorous discipline upon the student body was a decrease in enrolment. Fifty fewer men entered in the fall of 1904 than in the year before. Those who judged the progress of the university quantitatively, by numbers, were disturbed by this result. But Wilson himself was so "covetous of everything that would bring academic distinction" to Princeton that he was indifferent to the mere number of students. He knew well that the increased prestige that would follow his reforms would soon correct the difficulty, as indeed it did, and he had the absolute support of both faculty and trustees.

"Great reforms have to be paid for. And I think that the intelligent friends of Princeton, who study its movements with care, will be disposed to congratulate you, as I do heartily, that the loss in numbers has been so slight."[1]

The great majority of students themselves from the very first were ardent in their admiration of the new president. Youth well knows when it finds a leader who asks of them hard but great things to do.

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[1]Dr. John DeWitt, a trustee, to Woodrow Wilson, October 29, 1904.

III. REORGANIZATION: THE PRECEPTORIAL SYSTEM

Wilson's great vision for the reorganization of Princeton University was the establishment of a preceptorial system —"resembling Oxford, but better than Oxford." Fifty tutors were to be added at one time to the faculty; it was to be a radical change of educational method, a departure wholly new in America. The cost, capitalized, was to be $2,250,000, none of it in hand. The plan was as daring as it was original. It fired men of imagination; it startled the fearful and the cautious, as visions do. But Wilson had been studying the subject, intensely, for years. He had the courage of complete conviction.

Some reformers, hot with impatience, are willing to start the edifice of their dreams upon rotten foundations. Above everything, Wilson's mind was orderly—"single-track" he called it—and first things must come first. Progress must follow the orderly laws of growth.

Two things were necessary. First, money. Second, a reorganization and coördination of the curriculum. Without the first, no tutors could be hired: without the second, half their time would be wasted.

Wilson's first concern as the administrator at Princeton was thus with ways and means. In his report to the trustees on October 21, 1902, he says:

"But the first thing that struck me when I came to look closely into its affairs was, that it is insufficiently capitalized for its business."

He sees that "we are . . . using a capital of some $700,000 which we do not own or control."

Deficits occur every year which must be made up by contributions from rich friends of the university.

"This is evidently a very unsound, a very unsafe business situation."

No doubt some of the experienced business men of his

Board smiled not less at these discoveries—which were no discoveries to them—than at the extent of his new plans. They smiled but they followed. Who could tell what a leader of faith and courage could do!

Wilson had often laughed at Dr. McCosh's shameless solicitation of funds for "me college."[1] He had disparaged his own abilities in this direction. But once afire with his great project, he himself soon exceeded in "shamelessness" any of his predecessors. We have an example of his "assault upon the alumni" in his address at New York in December, 1902.[2] He began to press the campaign in every direction. He had no adequate secretarial assistance —the university could not afford it. Students served part time.[3] Wilson wrote out his letters and appeals in shorthand, sometimes transcribing them afterward on his own typewriter. They were not form letters, but each carefully personal. Not even his essays of former years were written with more laborious care than these letters to the rich of the earth. The yellowing memoranda of some of them remained in his files at his death—mute evidences of his toil. There were many rich men who were devoted graduates of Princeton: these he urged to greater generosity than ever before. He began a campaign to secure subscriptions by classes; and he reached out in every direction to men of philanthropic interests not connected with Princeton. He wrote to Andrew Carnegie:

"MY DEAR MR. CARNEGIE—

"We are forming plans for a new Princeton in which, I venture to believe, you will be interested,—if only because we mean to make the new Princeton like the old Princeton

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[1]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[2]*The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 462–473.

[3]One of them was McQueen S. Wightman of the class of 1904; another was Julian B. Beaty of the class of 1906.

of John Witherspoon's day and yet of the modern age, with its new interests, studies, methods and undertakings. Witherspoon made Princeton an instrument of patriotic public service; we mean, if we can, to make her the same again . . . .

"I have set forth the most immediate needs of the University in the report to the Board of Trustees which I take the liberty of sending you with this letter. That report shows that, if we would make Princeton again the dominant power and influence she once was, we must attempt nothing less than her reëndowment. . . ."[1]

He developed his vision at length and eloquently, he appealed especially for the proposed graduate college, and while the endowment he was seeking did not come, yet Carnegie afterward gave the money for the lake at Princeton that bears his name. On a later occasion, when Wilson pressed him for further help, Carnegie said:

"I have already given Princeton a lake."

Wilson responded instantly, "We needed bread and you gave us cake."

But times were hard and the struggle difficult. David B. Jones, one of Wilson's staunchest friends on the Board of Trustees, a sound business man, wrote in October, 1903, that he did not believe that Wilson or anyone else could raise any large endowments during the next few years.

It was proposed, therefore, that they should secure an emergency fund of $100,000 a year for three years in $5,000 or $2,500 subscriptions. Wilson entered upon the new plan with intense energy. If he could get the money to start his preceptorial system, he had the faith to believe that it would convince the world of the value of his programme, and that money would promptly flow in.

"I hate above all things to write a begging letter to generous men like you, who will feel the force of it more

[1]April 17, 1903.

than most men would; but in the present circumstances of the University I seem to have no choice in the matter.

"It is needless to tell you that this is not a time propitious for large gifts by way of endowment. It has seemed to all of us that it would be folly to press just now for the endowments we stand in such sore need of. And yet we must have money."[1]

In this task Wilson could have made little progress had it not been for the devoted sympathy and support of his Board of Trustees, especially such men as Cleveland H. Dodge, David B. Jones, M. Taylor Pyne, John L. Cadwalader, C. C. Cuyler, Cyrus H. McCormick, and others. Immense assistance also came later from the alumni organized in the Committee of Fifty, with Cleveland H. Dodge as the chairman. But it was the fire of Wilson's own enthusiasm, Wilson's new plans, constantly expressed at alumni meetings, urged in voluminous correspondence, talked eagerly to men of means, that inspired the movement. Wilson was making Princeton interesting.

The next thing, after money, was the complete reorganization of the courses. The growth of the university in recent years, he told the trustees, had resulted in "a miscellaneous enlargement rather than in a systematic development." There had been "a multiplication of courses which have in large part remained uncoördinated." There was no central principle; no orderly adjustment. Wilson was unsympathetic with the elective system carried to such extremes as at Harvard, in which "nobody but a freshman understands what anybody ought to take," with the result that the faculty "relieve themselves of all responsibility in the matter by leaving it entirely to the freshmen."[2]

One result of such confusion was the demoralization of

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Judge James H. Reed of Pittsburgh.

[2]Speech at a University Club dinner in Chicago, March 12, 1908.

the faculty, a staff "over-worked and under-paid," professors condemned to "obscure drudgery."

He regarded the reorganization of the courses "as preliminary to all plans of the university for the next generation." Much as he longed to start his preceptorial system, everything must await the construction of a firm and orderly foundation.

He began, therefore, in coöperation with an able committee of the faculty, the reconstruction of the curriculum. It proved a stupendous task, involving scores of meetings, lasting through many months. Old walls of division between scientific and classical courses had to be pulled down, duplications abolished, the exact weight to be given to the new subjects of economics and politics determined, ancient hostilities and jealousies, nowhere sharper than in a college government, had to be reconciled, and new departments organized. It was in many ways pioneer work which proved of value not only at Princeton, but throughout the nation. Emphasis was laid upon "guided education" as contrasted with "free electives."[2] Subjects of the freshman year were entirely prescribed, and of the sophomore year largely so. The junior was to make a choice, not "from a miscellany of studies, but . . . from a scheme of related subjects."[1]

"We must supply the synthesis and must see to it that, whatever group of studies the student selects, it shall at least represent the round whole, contain all the elements of modern knowledge. . . ."[2]

The committee began holding weekly meetings in 1903, and continued during the spring of 1904. Wilson's enthusiasm was contagious; his energy inspiring. It was like

[1]Report to the Board of Trustees, 1904.

[2]Inaugural address, October 25, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 455.

"reconstructing a state." It gave him the same kind of joy of creation that he had found in working over the constitutions of various societies in the past. Among his rare diary entries we find a number in the winter of 1904 dealing with the labours of the committee:

"Committee on Course of Study in the evening, 8–10:30, discussing Physics 'Group.' The Committee seems drifting away fr. the idea of general culture in the science group and inclining too much in the direction of specialization. Next Tuesday an all-day session projected, to hasten progress."[1]

"Spent the day in Committee on Course of Study—completing preliminary work on the Groups by adopting those in Art and Archæology and Geology and (partially, that in) Biology. Referred coördination of Groups and suggestion of schedule of hours to a sub-committee: West, Magie, Thompson, Neher."[2]

In April, he can write exultantly to Mrs. Wilson, then travelling in Italy, of the conclusion of the great work:

"To-day our Committee on the Course of Study completed its labours, and next week our report, with which we are all really delighted (the scheme has worked out wonderfully well, and all doubts have been removed from the minds of the members of the Committee), will be laid before the Faculty in a series of meetings next week. Fine will take the chair of the Faculty, and I, as chairman of the Committee, will take charge of the measure on the floor in debate. It is all most interesting, a bit exciting, and most encouraging. . . ."[3]

"I hope that the same thing will take place in the Faculty that took place in the Committee. There we began

[1]January 25, 1904.
[2]February 9, 1904.
[3]April 14, 1904.

a group of individuals and ended a *body* agreed in common counsel,—except for a final, purely temperamental 'kick' by —— who will quietly get over it."[1]

"The other piece of good news,—and it is *very* good,—is that the new course of study was last night finally, and unanimously, adopted by the University Faculty. It took only four meetings to put it through all its stages. . . . Everyone seemed to accept the *principle* of the report and all the main features of the scheme at once and without cavil; and the final adoption was characterized by real cordiality. All of which makes me very happy. It is not, as it stands now, exactly the scheme I at the outset proposed, but it is much better."[2]

At the beginning of the fall term (1904) the revolutionary new system went into operation. It was an instant success, "cordially received even by that arch conservative the undergraduate himself."[3]

"The ease and absence of friction and the general satisfaction with which it has been put into operation have surpassed our most sanguine expectations, and seem to give safe augury of its immediate success."[4]

The ground having thus been cleared and the wheels of the new system set to running smoothly, Wilson was ready to attack the still greater reform upon which he had set his heart. There was not yet money enough—"The Emergency Fund has grown to $72,500. Slow work!"[5]—but it was coming. It is true that he was overworking, for in addition to his activities in raising money and reconstructing the curriculum—to say nothing of the arduous administrative tasks of the new president of a

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, April 17, 1904.

[2]*Ibid.*, April 26, 1904.

[3]Report to the Board of Trustees, 1904.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, April 28, 1904.

TRUSTEES OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY WHO WERE STRONG SUPPORTERS OF WOODROW WILSON. TOP: DAVID B. JONES AND THOMAS D. JONES. CENTRE: DR. MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS AND HENRY B. THOMPSON. BOTTOM: CLEVELAND H. DODGE AND CYRUS H. McCORMICK.

university—he was giving many addresses and lectures in various parts of the country which, if they widened his acquaintance and increased his hold upon the public, heavily taxed his strength. His health could not be entirely depended upon, but he was learning stern self-discipline. In the summer of 1903, he sought rest and relief in a visit with his wife to Europe during which he made his first and only journey to the Continent—France and Italy, chiefly—until the great visit of 1919, when he was the most acclaimed of living men. He had indeed to watch himself at every turn.

"The Garfields have the art of getting up a dinner of delightful dishes not one of which I ought to eat!"[1]

In the summer of 1904 he retired with his family to the Canadian woods at Muskoka Lake, in Ontario—but watched with intense interest the campaign of Roosevelt and Parker for the Presidency. He was hopeless regarding national politics—especially hopeless about his own Democratic party. Would the tide never turn? He thought out a speech which he delivered that fall[2] urging the reorganization of the party by purging it of its unthinking radicals. He was at that time "near being a progressive Republican"[3] and was certainly not at all "radical."

In early 1905, his health broke entirely and in February he had an operation for hernia and spent five weeks convalescing in Florida. But if his body was fragile, his mind worked unceasingly. He was now devoting every energy to the launching of his plans for a preceptorial system—"which for more than twelve years past have seemed to me the only effectual means of making university instruction the helpful and efficient thing it should be."[4]

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, April 28, 1904.

[2]November 29th, before the Virginia Society of New York.

[3]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[4]Report to the Board of Trustees, 1905.

Underneath the preceptorial idea lay his own deepest convictions regarding education. He had thought it out in 1893 and 1894, had made it a purpose in the greatest of his educational addresses, that of 1896, had studied and deeply admired what he saw at Oxford and Cambridge in 1896 and 1899, had further outlined his purpose in his inaugural of 1902.

Men, he believed, are not educated by others: they educate themselves. They must read deeply, they must learn to think. It was not enough to have an ideal course of study on paper: "it was still going to be necessary to induce undergraduates to get interested in it."[1] A student might be exposed to education without catching it!

"Gentlemen, if we could get a body of such tutors at Princeton we could transform the place from a place where there are youngsters doing tasks to a place where there are men doing thinking, men who are conversing about the things of thought, men who are eager and interested in the things of thought. . . . Wherever you have a small class and they can be intimately associated with their chief in the study of an interesting subject they catch the infection of the subject; but where they are in big classes and simply hear a man lecture two or three times a week, they cannot catch the infection of anything, except it may be the voice and enthusiasm of the lecturer himself."[2]

He defined the new system and contrasted it with that of Oxford:

"That, you will say, is the English tutorial system. Yes, but the English make an old-fashioned mistake about it; they appoint their tutors for life and their tutors go to seed. No man can do that sort of thing for youngsters without getting tired of it. Now that is the truth of the

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[1]Speech at a University Club dinner in Chicago, March 12, 1908.

[2]Speech at a Princeton dinner in New York, December 9, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 471.

matter. It makes it necessary that he should always be understanding the difficulties of beginners, and after a while, ceasing to be a beginner himself, the thing becomes intolerable to him. . . . I do not believe you could afford to keep an ordinary tutor for more than five years at that particular job."[1]

There was some doubt upon the part of certain of the more conservative trustees as to the launching of the new project before it could be properly endowed,[2] but Wilson, having secured sufficient pledges to cover expenditures for three years, was anxious to go ahead. He attacked the task of securing the necessary tutors, or "preceptors," in the spring of 1905. Any college man knows the difficulty of finding even two or three really acceptable assistants within any reasonable time. Wilson was after fifty within six months. His files give evidence of the toil involved and the fire of energy and enthusiasm with which he undertook the work. He enlisted the aid of many other members of the faculty in seeking the men for their departments—Dean Fine, Dean West, Daniels, Hunt, Hibben, Vreeland, and others. He corresponded searchingly regarding every candidate, held many interviews in which he communicated some of his own fire to the men he was seeking to interest. Several of them wrote afterward that they were coming to Princeton, as one expressed it, because "I shall be working under your personal guidance."

"His manner of working was methodical in the extreme. In choosing the preceptors, he had for consideration an enormous number of applications from all over the country. Each applicant's record was carefully studied and analyzed, and a digest made. This done, he made his selections, which were recommended to the trustees for

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[1]Speech at a Princeton dinner in New York, December 9, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 470.

[2]Robert E. Annin, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 13. Annin refers to a letter of M. Taylor Pyne.

approval. Many of his notes were made in shorthand, and he dictated to me from these notes. After a time it became possible for me to read his notes, as he and I used the same system of shorthand."[1]

Somewhat to his own surprise, he was able to launch the new system in the fall of 1905—it having been formally adopted at the June meeting of the Board. By that time he had obtained forty-seven out of the fifty men required. They were all "proven scholars in their young maturity, men on the road to academic advancement"; and they ranked as assistant professors. It was altogether a remarkable group of young men, many of whom distinguished themselves in later years, not only in their own chosen fields but in public life.

The new men threw themselves into their work with splendid zeal. Small groups of students met informally with the preceptors to discuss the reading they had done.

"The prevalent idea was breadth of view with accuracy of treatment, no formalism."[2] When President Wilson occasionally met with professors and preceptors, he cautioned them against allowing the method to stiffen into the question-and-answer method. Conferences were to be "kept free in spirit, broad in method, regardful of the spirit, rather than the letter, sound at the basis. . . ."[3] His purpose was not so much to find out what the student did know, but to discover what he did not know and put him in the way of getting the knowledge. By such processes he hoped to materialize his long-cherished vision—the "intellectualizing of the undergraduates."[4]

Wilson could say in his report in the winter of 1905:

"I have now the great happiness of realizing that these

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[1] Julian B. Beaty to the author.

[2] Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

reforms have already been effected with ease and enthusiasm, that Princeton is likely to be privileged to show how, even in a great University, the close and intimate contact of pupil and teacher may even in the midst of the modern variety of studies, be restored and maintained. Our object in so largely recruiting our Faculty has been to take our instruction as much as possible out of the formal class-rooms and get it into the lives of the undergraduates, depending less on lectures and written tests and more on personal conference and intimate counsel."[1]

He set forth the essentials of the plan:

"We are trying to get away from the idea, born of the old system of lectures and quizzes, that a course in any subject consists of a particular teacher's lectures or the conning of a particular textbook, and to act upon the very different idea that a course is a subject of study to be got up by as thorough and extensive reading as possible outside the class-room; that the class-room is merely a place of test and review, and that lectures, no matter how authoritative the lecturer, are no more than a means of directing, broadening, illuminating, or supplementing the student's reading."[2]

What he was seeking was the building of an institution that should be "all alive," devoted to the realities of learning.

"And the gentlemen I have named are not the only preceptors. We are all preceptors."[3]

He could say with joy that "the amount of work done by the undergraduates has increased amazingly." And this was due not to compulsion but to genuine interest.

"I have seen things recently in Princeton which I never dreamed I should see. Certainly when I was an under-

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[1]Report to the Board of Trustees, 1905.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]*Ibid.*

graduate I never dreamed of it; and when I first went back into the faculty I never would have dreamed of it. I have seen undergraduates taking walks with members of the faculty, and without any sense of strangeness or distance between them."[1]

There was some grumbling indeed—some objection from parents whose sons could not meet the requirements of higher scholastic discipline added to the new methods of the preceptorial system.

"I do not know that it is particularly satisfactory to the eighty men who were dropped at the mid-year examinations; but I think that all of them are coming back next year, and will probably regard themselves as able to report progress at that time. I do know that the new spirit of study which has come upon Princeton would surprise some of you. [Laughter and applause.] . . . One of the undergraduates the other day said, in a tone of great condemnation, that Princeton was not the place it used to be—that men were actually talking about their studies at the clubs. He evidently regretted that as an invasion of the privileges of undergraduate life."[2]

On the whole, the new system was immensely popular. The seniors sang:

> Here's to those preceptor guys,
> Fifty stiffs to make us wise.

It literally revolutionized the life of the university. Fifty able and energetic young men brought into the faculty at one time were like oxygen in the blood of an anæmic institution, long inbred. For many of those in the faculty, the first years of development under Wilson's

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[1]Speech at a University Club dinner in Chicago, March 12, 1908.

[2]Address before the Western Association of Princeton Clubs at Cleveland, Ohio, May 19, 1906. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 491–492.

leadership were among the best of their lives. Each man felt himself a related part of a great scheme under an inspiring leader. Wilson "gave a sense of reality and security, combined with progress,"[1] to the place. Men felt they could go ahead, do things, say what they thought. "They 'felt no hollow places.' Everything became real."[2]

Wilson himself expressed the idea in an address to the alumni in 1906:

"It would be a very petty life to live if we were merely schoolmasters; it would not interest me for twenty-four hours to be a taskmaster in respect to the studies of a lot of youngsters. Unless I can lead them to see the beauty of the things that have seemed beautiful to me, I have mistaken my profession. It is not the whip that makes men, but the lure of things that are worthy to be loved. And so we feel that we are entitled to be full of hope in regard to the increasing intellectual life of Princeton. For, gentlemen, I am covetous for Princeton of all the glory that there is, and the chief glory of a university is always intellectual glory."[3]

Behind all these efforts, these successes, lay always Wilson's deep sense that it was the nation that was being inspired and served.

"The chief glory of a university is the leadership of the nation in the things that attach to the highest ambitions that nations can set themselves, those ideals which lift nations into the atmosphere of things that are permanent and do not fade from generation to generation. [Applause.] I do not see how any man can fail to perceive that scholarship, that education, in a country like ours, is a branch of statesmanship."[4]

[1]Professor George M. Harper to the author.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Address before the Western Association of Princeton Clubs at Cleveland, Ohio, May 19, 1906. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 493.

[4]*Ibid.*

The preceptorial system, revolutionary as it was, stood the test of time. It worked. "It created a new Princeton." It was indeed expensive—so expensive that it caused many a cautious friend to shake his head—but it added greatly to the prestige of the institution. Princeton with its new president began to be looked to for educational leadership.

Years afterward, President Hibben said, in a deliberate judgment of this feature of Wilson's constructive work:

"This undertaking was a bold adventure on the part of Princeton. In the inauguration of this new policy Mr. Wilson showed the courage and persistence which throughout his life so conspicuously characterized his nature. There were added to the Faculty at one time some fifty new members to take part in this preceptorial work. The new plan and policies attracted the attention of the educational world and all looked upon the new experiment with interest, many possibly with doubtful misgivings; but the experimental stage was soon passed and its marked success demonstrated its value for the University and secured for it a permanent place in our method of instruction."[1]

President Lowell of Harvard said of his work as an educator:

". . . he certainly did raise Princeton very much in grade among the institutions of higher learning in the country. He was also, so far as I am aware, the first head of a college who strove to raise the respect for scholarship among the undergraduate body."[2]

Princeton to-day, indeed, stands at the forefront of American universities in its progress toward the "new education." It has built upon the foundation laid by Woodrow Wilson until "spontaneous intellectual life is no

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[1]From an address at a memorial service for President Wilson, held in Princeton on February 24, 1924.

[2]Letter from President A. Lawrence Lowell to Charles S. Hamlin, October 10, 1924.

PROFESSORS AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY WHO PLAYED A PROMINENT PART IN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE CONTROVERSY. TOP: DEAN HENRY B. FINE AND DEAN ANDREW F. WEST. CENTRE: PROFESSOR JOHN GRIER HIBBEN AND PROFESSOR EDWARD GRANT CONKLIN. BOTTOM: PROFESSOR EDWARD CAPPS AND PROFESSOR WINTHROP M. DANIELS.

longer an uncommon phenomenon in the undergraduate body."

IV. THE BUILDER

Wilson had made a brave beginning at Princeton with the reorganization of the courses of study and the introduction of the revolutionary preceptorial system. But it was only a beginning!

"We cannot stop there," he told the alumni.

More professors were needed, and new laboratories and dormitories—and even a revivified Board of Trustees. A graduate college must be built and the sciences encouraged. The social life of Princeton, its athletics, its various outside activities, must be so coördinated as to promote rather than to hamper the supreme purpose of the university—intellectual discipline. He had in his mind a "complete new synthesis."

He attacked the problem of strengthening the faculty with especial enthusiasm. It was even more important to secure the ablest men in the country to head departments than it was to find suitable preceptors. His scraps of diary and his correspondence from 1903 to 1906 overflow with the eagerness—almost the passionate eagerness—of his pursuit. When he found the man he wanted he would never let go until he had secured him.

A good example was the invitation in January, 1904, to Professor Frank Thilly[1] to take the chair of psychology.

". . . Woodrow Wilson's epistle was so gracious, so whole-hearted, so human, that I accepted his invitation to visit him at Princeton without further consideration."[2]

We have Wilson's notes in his diary as to what happened when Thilly arrived:

[1]Now Dean of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University.

[2]Professor Frank Thilly to the author.

"Principal interest of the day centred in the arrival of Prof. Frank Thilly, of the University of Missouri, of whom we have been thinking as Baldwin's successor, and who had generously consented to come here for a conference. . . .

"Ellen and I took dinner at the Hibbens' to meet Prof. Thilly, whom we found most ingenuous and interesting,—a man after our own hearts in simplicity and genuineness,—and withal of singular penetration and charm in his talk,—a highly trained native American of the Lincoln type, with his faculties released by education of unusual range and thoroughness."[1]

"Prof. Thilly took dinner with us, and charmed sister A. and Madge as he had charmed Ellen and me by his frank and open nature, his play of mind, his charm of directness and simplicity.

"After dinner had a talk of an hour and a half with him about Princeton, ourselves, himself, which ended only because of engagements. Quite made up my mind to call him.

"At 4 Ellen and I went on our usual Sunday afternoon visit to the Hibbens'—Thilly, of course, the chief topic of conversation,—and at 5 went with them to see Miss Ricketts.

"In the evening Jack had Fine, West, Ormond, and Warren in at tea to meet Prof. T."[2]

"Lecture; and final talk (at Jack's) with Prof. Thilly. Asked his permission to nominate him to the Board for the chair of Psychology. He promised to write after reaching home and consulting his wife, of whose charms we hear glowing accounts. He left at 3:50. I lunched with him at the Hibbens'.

[1]January 16, 1904.

[2]January 17, 1904.

"At five a chat with Jack and Mrs. Hibben about the whole thing,—the two days of Thilly. Our joint impressions most favourable."[1]

Professor Thilly remarks concerning the matter:

"That was the beginning of a warm affection on my part for Woodrow Wilson, a feeling which I have never lost. What impressed me from the beginning was his sincerity, his 'unaffectedness,' his modesty and simplicity, his friendliness. The public so often regarded him as a cold, disembodied intellect, as a kind of logic machine; he was nothing of the kind, as his friends know, and as his enemies ought to know: one neither loves nor hates a logic-machine."[2]

Men joined the faculty, indeed, because of the intellectual regeneration of Princeton which was taking place under Wilson's leadership. Educators felt that here was virile experimentation, healthy growth.

"A professor from another university, who came to Princeton about the same time that I did, said to me, 'What brought you to Princeton?' I answered, 'Woodrow Wilson. And you?' 'The same,' he said. Both of us were inspired by his ideals of a university, of education, of life, and we wanted to join with him in the great work which he was doing."[3]

Wilson made a powerful impression upon many of these men—an impression that remained constant.

"He was in many respects the greatest man I have ever known. His greatness was not due to the official pedestal on which he stood but to his own personality: he was cast in heroic mould. He had a mind as clear and penetrating as sunlight and an incomparable grace and force of expression

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[1]January 18, 1904.

[2]Professor Frank Thilly to the author.

[3]Professor Edwin Grant Conklin to the author.

which had in it the quality of inspiration. His ideals were so high that to many 'practical' men they seemed visionary, and yet again and again he made those visions real. He was deliberate in making up his mind and slow to begin action, but once having decided, neither the claims of friendship nor the threats of enemies could turn him from his course.

"These qualities made him both loved and hated; no one occupied a neutral position with respect to Woodrow Wilson. His friends loved him and his enemies hated him for the same reason, namely his uncompromising adherence to his ideals."[1]

Wilson made personal and social contacts an important factor in building up his faculty. When new professors or instructors came to Princeton, he made it a point to call upon them, even though in later years it became an arduous matter.

"I am sure that you will enjoy the life at Princeton. It is natural, simple, cordial, and there are many good fellows to supply flavour to the intercourse."[2]

In short, he gave a new tone, a new inspiration, to the life at Princeton: an ardency of purpose, a keen intellectual interest.

"In an incredibly short time his scholarly and energetic spirit pervaded the whole place. . . . It was one of the great experiences of my life to have worked under him. When his ideas and those of the department did not agree, I always found him open to conviction, but he had to be convinced before he would yield. Once convinced he became a staunch backer of the new conviction. I have never known a man of higher principles or stronger ideals. He frequently knew that to follow a course he considered best would

[1]Professor Edwin Grant Conklin to the author.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to Professor Harry A. Garfield (now president of Williams College), July 29, 1903. Wilson brought Garfield to Princeton as professor of politics.

arouse opposition. He dreaded this inevitable result but never hesitated."[1]

He "did not object to opposition if it was clear and objective. Dean Fine was constantly disagreeing with him and debating with him," but "he was always thinking away ahead of the rest of us."[2] On occasion he was "so intent upon an objective that he was not careful of people's feelings." Professor Harper remembers a sharp discussion in faculty meeting in which Wilson disagreed with him. On his return home after the meeting, just at his own door, he felt someone touch him on the arm. It was Wilson, eager to explain that nothing he said was meant as a personal criticism.[3]

"He never flattered anyone in his life. I never saw him do a dishonest thing."[4]

Such things as these bound men to Wilson—and held them through all the years. There were later to come disagreements and enmities, which will be considered in their proper places. A strong man, thinking ahead of his contemporaries, determined in his pursuit of his vision, is certain sooner or later to meet opposition and to make enemies.

Increases in the faculty—especially the expansion of the science departments—involved the problem of new buildings: the physical reorganization of the university. In this activity, Wilson had been concerned from the beginning. He had a keen appreciation of architecture and no inconsiderable knowledge of it. He had spent much time in Europe visiting the finest examples of scholastic buildings, such as those at Oxford and Cambridge. He had studied the cathedrals, not merely as a tourist, but as a close and

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[1]Professor W. U. Vreeland to the author.

[2]Professor Edward Capps to the author.

[3]Professor George M. Harper to the author.

[4]*Ibid.*

studious observer. One has only to read the account of his vision of a rebuilt Princeton in his address to the great alumni gathering in December, 1902, to understand what enthusiasm lay behind his campaign:

"Gentlemen, we have dreamed a dream in Princeton of how the charm of that place shall be enhanced."[1]

"By the very simple device of building our new buildings in the Tudor Gothic style we seem to have added to Princeton the age of Oxford and of Cambridge; we have added a thousand years to the history of Princeton by merely putting those lines in our buildings which point every man's imagination to the historic traditions of learning in the English-speaking race. We have declared and acknowledged our derivation and lineage; we have said, 'This is the spirit in which we have been bred,' and as the imagination, as the recollection of classes yet to be graduated from Princeton are affected by the suggestions of that architecture, we shall find the past of this country married with the past of the world and shall know with what destiny we have come into the forefront of the nations. . . ."[2]

Here, exactly as in his work for the reorganization of the intellectual life of the university, Wilson sought unity of purpose, harmony of effect. In many an institution, forces of diversity, individual eccentricity, or selfish ambition, have broken down that harmony of design which makes for beauty, and the university has become a hodge-podge of structural specimens. A rich man gives money to construct a certain sort of building, to be supervised, say, by his own architect—a monument possibly to himself or his family—and it requires stiff purpose to look the gift horse in the mouth. A devoted group of alumni offers a much-needed laboratory or dormitory to be set in a particular spot—which may destroy the

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 464.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 463–464.

general plan. It is a bold president, indeed, who dares resist. Wilson had all these problems of diversity to meet; and his stout insistence upon architectural unity—an architectural unity which to-day makes Princeton one of the most beautiful if not *the* most beautiful of American universities—was not easily digested by those whom he opposed.

Henry B. Thompson, who has been chairman for years of the Princeton trustees' committee on grounds and buildings, says of Wilson:

"I think of that period relating to the architecture of the university with much satisfaction, for it disclosed so many delightful and fine traits in Wilson. We were generally in accord, although my first experience was absolutely the opposite. Making my first official call at his office in '79 Hall, after being elected trustee, in the course of conversation I said, 'Mr. President, there seems to be quite a difference of opinion on the location of the new laboratories—the physical and biological.' His answer was, 'Thompson, as long as I am president of Princeton I propose to dictate the architectural policy of the university.' Then I remarked, 'To the extent of one vote on the grounds and buildings committee, and as I have one vote, I hope we shall agree.' On that particular issue of the location of the buildings we disagreed, and I outvoted him in committee; but the following summer we were near neighbours, occupying cottages at the Ausable Club Reservation in the Adirondacks, and we spent a good many hours over the drawings and specifications of Guyot Hall and the Palmer Laboratory, and we worked in absolute harmony.

"Wilson had instinctively a fine sense of proportion and a keen appreciation of good architecture. His vision for the Princeton campus was a beautiful vision. . . . I have heard him say more than once, 'Why should not a laboratory be as susceptible to good architecture as any other building?

I do not believe in considering them merely as workshops.'"[1]

It was Wilson who backed with all his power the employment of a supervising architect to meet what one of the trustees[2] called "the deplorable habit of employing a new architect and using a new style of architecture and a new material for every new building that is erected."[3] Ralph Adams Cram, perhaps the greatest authority in America on Gothic architecture, was chosen and has held the position ever since.

"I was impressed with the extreme interest shown by President Wilson in all these matters, an interest which extended to the minor details and demonstrated a very broad grasp both of the practical and the architectural principles involved. As I remember, I always obtained from the President the most intelligent and generous support for what I was trying to do, and he always seemed at once to see the problems in the broadest manner. . . .

"I remember particularly how once when we were discussing some large sketch plans, Mr. Wilson got down on the floor and worked over them with me in the most intimate and interested manner."[3]

As a place of beauty and distinction, Princeton owes much of what it is to-day to Woodrow Wilson—to the determination with which he adhered to his ideals.

Wilson's fire of regeneration extended even to the Board of Trustees. It was a large Board, and several of the members, as often happens in such cases, were not only useless, but positively detrimental to the functioning of the university. This was clearly recognized by some of the more active members but they naturally dreaded to take action. David B. Jones wrote:

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[1]Henry B. Thompson to the author.

[2]Robert Garrett.

[3]Ralph Adams Cram to the author.

"Nothing has given me more encouragement, hardly as much encouragement, as what I learned of your practical determination to do something in the way of regenerating the Board. You are justified in taking this position on the ground, that as it stands, it virtually makes further progress on your part extremely difficult, if not impossible. In the minds of those who consider Princeton's interests, there can be but one opinion. . . .

"If a man intending to take an interest in Princeton were to attend one of its Board meetings, or if with a fair acquaintance with the members, he should go over the list of trustees as it now stands, it would, I am satisfied, neutralize any appeal you might make."[1]

The president replied:

"What you say is true, even if painfully true. We are not engaged in pleasure but in the performance of service and pressing duty in administering the affairs of the University; and we must speak of all things as they are. I shall try to act in the spirit of your counsel."[2]

It was at best a disagreeable business and matters drifted along until the end of 1905. Certain trustees then proposed to seek the resignation of the objectionable members. A request prepared by M. Taylor Pyne was signed by a number of the trustees, but when the moment came, no one of them wanted to undertake the actual task, and Wilson himself agreed to do it. An appointment was arranged in the office of a trust company in lower New York by one of the oldest and most distinguished members of the Board, who, after welcoming Wilson and the "abandoned trustee, . . . literally turned and ran out of the room."

"I will not trouble you to refer to your papers, Mr. ——," said Wilson. "Under the circumstances it is for the

[1]March 15, 1904.

[2]March 20, 1904.

good of Princeton University that you retire from the Board. In case you do not offer your resignation I shall move your removal at the next meeting of the Board."[1]

Two resignations were promptly forthcoming.

From 1905 onward, Wilson's influence in the appointment of new members of the Board was considerable. He was charged by his enemies during the great controversies of 1909 and 1910 with seeking the appointment only of "personal admirers." What he really wanted was "live men," not of the kind so often chosen to moribund boards as a "distinguished honour," but men who would contribute vitally to the upbuilding of Princeton; and toward the end of his administration, when every election was either pro- or anti-Wilson, he did seek men who were sympathetic with his policies—as his enemies sought men who would defeat them. Had he craved "personal admiration," he could have had it at a lower price; he could have rested upon the well-won laurels of the achievements of 1905, without carrying forward the tireless campaigns from 1907 to 1910, without the suffering and defeat which his pursuit of his ultimate ideals so swiftly invited. He waged his battles utterly regardless of personalities, his own included—too regardless!

To realize his vision of a "university made perfect," he seemed willing to attack any task, no matter how arduous or disagreeable. He had the kind of artistic, creative mind that loathed disorder, slackness, inefficiency.

"I remember once remarking to him, 'Besides a faculty, Princeton needs a business manager.' He answered 'I agree to that; how can we bring it about?'"[2]

He thought the matter through and brought in to the Board a resolution appointing Andrew C. Imbrie financial secretary with wide powers.

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to the author: also Professor Winthrop M. Daniels to the author.

[2]Henry B. Thompson to the author.

"He was deeply interested in the economical management of the university and quickly saw the necessity of coördinating the various departments under one management; and it was largely the result of his foresight and coöperation which gave us our present system."[1]

It is astonishing that he was able to accomplish so much in so short a time. There were those even during this earlier time who began to shake their heads over the speed of his progress. "Wilson drives too hard." He was too swift, too eager, for men of slower and more cautious minds. He was "too intense." Sometimes he himself expressed his impatience with the "human intractables" that curbed him and held him back.

"Day of routine. Kept in my office till quarter of 5 on business that might have been finished before 3 if academic men were only prompt in movement and brief in statement!"[2]

It would have been a miracle—unexampled in human events—if such a career could have continued unchecked or unopposed. Men stop this side the stars! Diversity is as much a principle of life as unity. It is amazing, indeed, that Wilson should have had so clear a course even for three years. It is amazing that he should have been able to bear the physical strain of such labours, let alone the intense mental activity. He was soon indeed to pay the hard penalty of another physical breakdown.

With the achievement of the preceptorial system in 1905—and the reorganization of the university that went with it—Wilson's splendid impetus somewhat spent itself: and the forces of opposition, diverse ideas and ambitions, which had appeared years previously, a cloud no larger than a man's hand in the clear heavens of Wilson's aspiration, began to spread and darken: began indeed to

[1]Henry B. Thompson to the author.

[2]Extract from Mr. Wilson's diary, January 12, 1904.

challenge his leadership. There is a point in the career of every crusader when he exhausts the reservoir of public idealism—when he makes further progress only upon the passion of his own purpose. The struggle was to gather force and bitterness: until, during the years from 1907 to 1910, it was to supersede everything else.

At the heart of the most important phase of the opposition—that centring around the plans for a graduate college—was one of the ablest and shrewdest men on the Princeton faculty, Andrew F. West. He also, like Wilson, was of Scotch-Irish descent, the son of a Presbyterian minister: the same hard-knit fighting stock. His father, the Reverend Nathaniel West, had the reputation of being one of the "most implacable fighters in the Presbytery." Three years older than Wilson, West had graduated from Princeton in 1874, a year before Wilson entered as a freshman. He had returned to the university as professor of Latin in 1883—the year that Wilson gave up his starveling law practice in Atlanta to go to Johns Hopkins. He was an eager scholar and classicist, had edited *Terence* and *Richard de Bury*. He had a gifted and lively mind; no one could turn a better Latin inscription or organize a finer pageant for a ceremonial occasion. He loved the outward amenities, the "pomp of place," the "accoutrement of things." He was an ambitious man, "witty and kindly," robust in physique in those days, "a two-hundred-forty-pounder—with a sea captain's ruddy skin, large features, hearty voice and manner. . . . Under emotional pressure he could roar like a bull and also close his eyes and charge as blindly."[1] He was much sought after for his genial society, and as a diner-out was always welcome at the hospitable boards of Princeton. His own table was a delightful one.

While Wilson and West were both, in the earlier days of

[1]William Allen White, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 152.

Wilson's professorship, heartily in accord regarding the sad administrative situation at Princeton, and both were progressives, Wilson began early to distrust West, and to disagree with him regarding what he considered his tendency toward "exclusiveness." As far back as 1897, we find this entry in Wilson's diary:

"*Morning*, interview with West, in wh. he showed the most stubborn prejudice about introducing a Unitarian into the Faculty."[1]

There was, however, no outward evidence of hostility on either side. While West himself probably had aspirations for the presidency of the university at the time of Wilson's election, he showed no mark of jealousy or ill-will toward Wilson and was cordial in his proffers of aid in the difficult problems confronting the new president.

Raymond B. Fosdick, a friend of both men, said that they came to hate each other like true Scotsmen, but back of it all lay the kind of mutual respect which one hard fighter feels for another. At the time that scandalous stories began to be circulated about Wilson, Fosdick chanced to meet West and found him indignant. While Wilson might be beneath contempt in other ways, he did not have that fault![2]

In order to comprehend clearly the bitter controversy of later years, it will be necessary at this point, as indeed it is interesting, to look into the earlier phases of the struggle for a graduate college. It will be seen how early the seeds of dissension were strewn: and how they grew, at least at first, out of the circumstances, not at all out of personal rivalry.

Princeton had long had a graduate school: but not a graduate college to house it. The distinction is important. West's interest for years had been in building a "college"

[1]January 21, 1897.

[2]Raymond B. Fosdick to the author.

or "quadrangle." At the Sesquicentennial in 1896—when Wilson delivered his first great educational address, "Princeton in the Nation's Service," West advanced the project of a residential graduate college to accommodate the students of the graduate school. President Patton voiced his approval and architects were even authorized to make plans for the buildings—which were to be upon the grounds of the university. Wilson was one of a faculty committee of four which later prepared a forceful petition to the trustees urging the necessity of a graduate college in building up the prestige and influence of Princeton. The presence of a strong body of graduate students, the committee argued, would promote "intellectual seriousness" among the undergraduates.[1] Even at this early time, Wilson's idea of complete unity between graduate and undergraduate work, with one intimately influencing the other, was thus clearly set forth.

But everything drifted under Patton's administration, and years slipped by and nothing was done. In 1900, however, M. Taylor Pyne, one of the most energetic and generous of the trustees, a great friend of West's, became chairman of the committee on the graduate school and West was promptly elected dean of the proposed graduate college. In order to avoid control by Patton, under whom "nothing ever happened," he was given a wide range of power. There was nothing in the definition of his functions to show that he was in any respect subject to the authority of either the president or the faculty. While it seemed necessary to take this course in order to get anything whatever accomplished, the trustees were unwittingly sowing seeds of divided control, of rival interests within the university, of decentralization, which were in later years to bear bitter fruit.

West took up his work with great energy. From the first

[1] Minutes of the Board of Trustees.

he was deeply concerned about the question of a site for the new college. He urged upon the trustees' committee in March (1902), and again in May, the necessity of choosing a site "which will help toward securing endowment."[1] In June, 1902, Wilson was elected president of Princeton University, and Dean West received an appropriation ($2,500) for use in making a trip to Europe to study methods of housing graduate students. The two men were thus launched upon their administrative careers at Princeton, one to head the university, the other to build up the graduate college, in the same month—and with no clear definition of their respective powers and duties. Any one of the able business men on the Board of Trustees would have scotched instantly such a tendency toward divided control in the conduct of his own affairs: it was not only tolerated but encouraged by those who directed Princeton University.

Wilson himself was heart and soul committed to the project of building up a graduate college. In his Inaugural address in October, 1902, he set forth his ideal in no uncertain terms—nor left any doubt whatever as to where he thought it should be placed:

"We mean, so soon as our generous friends have arranged their private finances in such a way as to enable them to release for our use enough money for the purpose, to build a notable graduate college. . . . We shall build it, not apart, but as nearly as may be at the very heart, the geographical heart, of the university; and its comradeship shall be for young men and old, for the novice as well as for the graduate. It will constitute but a single term in the scheme of coördination which is our ideal. The windows of the graduate college must open straight upon the walks and quadrangles and lecture halls of the *studium generale*."[2]

[1]Report of Dean West, March 8, 1902.

[2]*The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 457.

Here we have the expression of his intense devotion to the ideal of unity and coördination of every part of the university—an ideal to which he clung with unremitting tenacity.

He went a step further in his first report to the trustees, by asking for an endowment as soon as the money could be obtained, of $3,000,000 to work out the plan. He heartily commended West's plans:

"On the side of university growth our first and most obvious need is a Graduate College. Professor West has made us familiar with the plans for such a college which he has conceived. Those plans seem to me in every way admirable and worthy of adoption. . . . This is not merely a pleasing fancy of an English college placed in the midst of our campus to ornament it. In conceiving this little community of scholars set up at the heart of Princeton, Professor West has got at the real gist of the matter, the real means by which a group of graduate students are most apt to stimulate and set the pace for the whole University."[1]

It is plain that at this time everyone understood clearly that the graduate college was to be located on the campus "at the heart of Princeton" where there might be constant and intimate relationships between graduate and undergraduate students, the graduate to "stimulate and set the pace for the whole University." In the beginning, West himself clearly entertained this idea. As he and Hibben wrote in October, 1909:

"Before this plan[2] was instituted and tried we were clearly of the opinion that the Graduate College should be located at least in immediate contiguity to the central campus, preferably on what is known as the Olden Tract, for the reason that the choice of a site at some distance

[1]Report to the Board of Trustees, October 21, 1902.

[2]Merwick.

THE WITHERSPOON GANG AT PRINCETON IN 1904—A REUNION OF THE MEN WHO HAD BEEN STUDENTS WITH WILSON IN 1879. ("THE GANG.") LEFT TO RIGHT: WM. B. LEE, ROBERT BRIDGES, J. EDWIN WEBSTER, DR. HIRAM WOODS, DR. CHARLES W. MITCHELL, JUDGE ROBERT HENDERSON, WOODROW WILSON, AND CHARLES TALCOTT.

raised the question as to whether residential separateness might not tend to separateness in institutional and intellectual development and thus make difficult the maintenance of the integral unity, beneficent interaction and close sympathetic relation of the Graduate College with the University as a whole."[1]

West's tour of inspection of English and Continental universities in the summer of 1902 made a tremendous impression upon him. The life at Oxford, imposing buildings, and striking effects, captured him completely. His letter to Wilson, October 4th, from that place, has pasted on it four clippings taken from a book of Oxford views. The Magdalen Tower charmed him. "By *moonlight*, what a dream in silvery grays and whites!"[2] The universities of Europe, rich in tradition, pure in architecture, and lovely to visit, thrilled him, too. When he faced homeward in December, 1902, he was fairly bristling with European ideas and ideals.[3]

He wrote a persuasive brochure, formulating his plans, in January, 1903. Wilson added a preface consisting of a paragraph from his report to the trustees, October 21, 1902, with a few minor changes. This preface, used afterward by West's friends as a sweeping approval by Wilson of all of West's plans, was thus written months before the brochure appeared! Moreover, the important thing in the brochure as Wilson considered it was West's complete approval of his ideal of a graduate college set "at the heart of Princeton."[4]

"The Graduate College will crown our undergraduate

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[1]Report of the special committee regarding the Proctor gift, p. 20.

[2]Letter from Dean West to Woodrow Wilson, October 4, 1902. The Cleveland Tower, afterward the central feature of the graduate college, closely resembles the Magdalen Tower.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Preface to the brochure of Dean West, *The Proposed Graduate College of Princeton University.*

liberal education, completing the organization of the central and regulative part of our University. It is the one addition needed to give unity to the system. Year after year, as undergraduates enter and pass on to graduation, they will be helped on their way by chosen graduates who have gone over the way before them and guided successive college generations. Year after year, some of the newer graduates trained in the Graduate College will fill the places of those who have ceased to teach. The whole system, from freshman year to the end of the highest studies, is then self-perpetuating and self-renewing."[1]

The brochure was beautifully printed with photogravure pictures—calculated to impress the most hardened of philanthropists—and presented to the Board in March, 1903.

At this time and during the next two years, Wilson and the entire faculty, indeed everyone in any way interested in Princeton, were engaged in the arduous and exciting labour of reorganizing the university—building firmly from the bottom according to the orderly plans that Wilson had outlined. Everyone, including Dean West, understood that undergraduate problems must first be solved, before the superstructure of a graduate school could be considered.

"I am, of course, convinced that the undergraduate interests are our first and necessary concern, and that all else should give way to this consideration. It is also clear there can be no strong Graduate School in Princeton except as built on a strong undergraduate foundation. If, therefore, the exclusive choice between undergraduate and graduate interests becomes necessary, I think the Graduate School ought to be sacrificed."[2]

But West was hopeful that something might be done

[1] *The Proposed Graduate College of Princeton University*, p. 14.

[2] Report of Dean West, December 5, 1903.

soon to provide better conditions for graduate students. He suggested in October, 1903, that "as a temporary experiment, some house with grounds should be secured for graduate students."[1] Later, upon the motion of his warm friend Grover Cleveland, West suggested renting a large residence on the Bayles farm for three years, and that the trustees "make me responsible for the conduct of the experiment."[2]

The amount needed to start the work was comparatively small—$6,250—and with Wilson's approval the dean made an effort to raise the money. But the president himself, with powerful help from trustees and alumni, was then conducting a whirlwind campaign to secure $100,000 a year for three years to launch the preceptorial system. There were also campaigns afoot by various classes for money to put into necessary new buildings. As a result, West could not get the funds he needed, nor was he satisfied with the Bayles farm location. He was not discouraged, however, and kept urging attention to his plans.[3] He felt that the time was coming, now that the "indispensable undergraduate basis for graduate work had been resurveyed and relaid on lines of enduring strength"[4] and the money for the preceptorial system, which he heartily approved, was in sight, or nearly so, when the committee should allow him "to press urgently the importance of making a prompt and decided advance in the equipment of our Graduate School."[5]

On October 20, 1904, Grover Cleveland, who was to become a considerable factor in the coming controversy, was made chairman of the trustees' committee on the

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[1] "The Proposed Graduate College," p. 11.
[2] Report of Dean West, December 5, 1903.
[3] *Ibid.*, June 1, 1904, and October 15, 1904.
[4] *Ibid.*, October 15, 1904.
[5] *Ibid.*

graduate school, and began to exert his great power and prestige in pushing West's proposals. West and Cleveland had been warm personal friends since 1896. They had many interests in common. It was West who succeeded in getting Cleveland to attend the Sesquicentennial in 1896; Cleveland found so much charm in the lovely old village that he decided to make his home there when the cares of office were laid aside in March, 1897. It was largely through West that he secured one of the old estates in Princeton, and as a mark of his appreciation and regard for West, named it "Westland." Cleveland had no especial knowledge of educational problems in general and none whatever of those at Princeton when he moved to the village, but he became the Stafford Little Lecturer on public affairs, and in 1901, the same year that West took up his duties as dean, Cleveland was elected a trustee of the university.

With the powerful support of Cleveland and Pyne, the plans for the graduate college began to develop more hopefully. And at the same time there were increasing signs of a divergence—a separation of interest. Many things, scarcely perceptible at the time, but clear enough now in the records and letters, indicate that West was beginning to seek control for himself, to draw away from the close unity of interest and influence which was the life blood of Wilson's programme.

He made a suggestion[1] in October, 1903, for obtaining a house *with grounds*. If this was to be a temporary experiment, why were grounds necessary? Again, in proposing the setting up of the Bayles farm project, he asked the trustees' committee to "make me responsible for the conduct of the experiment." The dean's efforts to get funds for it at the same time that the president was soliciting for undergraduate purposes stimulated a spirit of rivalry.

[1]Report of Dean West, October 14, 1903.

Also in his October, 1904, report, the dean notified the trustees' committee that "by arrangement with the Treasurer's office the fees of graduate students are now collected at the office of the Dean of the Graduate School and are subsequently turned over to the Treasurer." He explained that this centralized and simplified the enrolment of graduate students and relieved the treasurer's office from what had hitherto been an unnecessary and vexatious method of receiving their fees.[1] While this may have been true, it was also true that it tended to decentralize the business administration of the university.

On June 12, 1905, at the very meeting of the Board at which Wilson's preceptorial system was formally adopted, West reported that he had at last found suitable quarters for the graduate college. Largely through the generosity of M. Taylor Pyne, he had been promised Merwick, the former residence and grounds of Professor Raymond on Bayard Lane. The house was large enough to accommodate comfortably at least twelve students in residence and as many more at the dining table. There were eleven acres of grounds about the place, devoted to lawn and gardens—a beautiful spot only a short walk from the campus, yet outside of it.

He had obtained subscriptions of $5,700 to begin the work, Mr. Cleveland's name heading the list with $100 a year for three years.

While there was no disagreement about the desirability of going ahead with the plans for a graduate college as rapidly as possible, there was doubt upon the part of some of the trustees regarding the financial aspects of the case. They had authorized the preceptorial system, employed fifty new professors at $93,000 a year—and there was as yet too little assurance of future support of the work. To make it secure, it must be endowed, and

[1]Report of Dean West, October 15, 1904.

already Wilson and several of the trustees were planning to seek the money for that purpose. It can be seen how impossible it was to escape growing rivalry, with two groups seeking money and with plans—both of which were excellent in themselves—that clashed. Why should sensible trustees have tolerated such a division of purpose?

Merwick was opened as a temporary graduate college on September 21, 1905—in the same month that the preceptorial system was also being launched. Wilson approved the project—believing that it would prove a "sure prophecy of the graduate college for which we so eagerly hope." It was to fill the gap until the foundations of the undergraduate work could be made secure and orderly and they could obtain the real endowment—some $3,000,000—for a graduate college "at the heart of Princeton."

Such were the conditions, and the growing perplexities and rivalries, at the close of the year 1905. Thus far Wilson's clear and bold programme for the coördination of the university, its development according to an harmonious plan, aimed at a single great purpose, had met with astonishing success. But the first glorious impetus was passing; powerful new interests, which Wilson considered decentralizing and inharmonious, were crowding forward; his own innovations, now that they were in operation, failed to accomplish all that he had dreamed. His "ideal university" was still remote, his vision still unrealized!

The year 1906 was the crisis of his presidency at Princeton.

V. THE CRITICAL YEAR 1906

Crises in Wilson's earlier years, before he reached, in 1910, the "self-fulfillment of leadership," were always associated with the ruling passion of his life—affairs and political leadership.

"Don't you pity me, with all my old political longings . . . set throbbing again?" he wrote his friend Bridges during one of his periods of restlessness and doubt.

He had persuaded himself again and again that he could satisfy his longings for "profound and public-spirited statesmanship" by becoming an "outside force in politics," by the indirect means of "literary and nonpartisan agencies." He had toiled mightily as a writer, as an orator, as an educator, he had sought passionately to train young men for the leadership he himself had renounced. He had been astonishingly successful, as the world judged, in everything he undertook. It is given to few men indeed to achieve distinction in so many fields. Yet he was inwardly unsatisfied. "Secondary successes!"

After his election to the presidency of Princeton in 1902, there were months of joy and exaltation. He "felt like a prime minister." Education was "minor statesmanship." He could lead, create, direct. He could be a kind of statesman.

A *minor* statesman——

In the first three years of his presidency, while every thought, every ounce of energy, was devoted to great tasks of reconstruction, while he was making his dreams come true, he was eagerly happy. He was setting the politics and the administration of his little state in order, he was appealing to and leading his constituents, he was making up his ministerial budget, and seeking the funds from his parliament.

"I always feel, upon an occasion like this, that I am a responsible minister reporting to his constituents."[1]

It is significant that his addresses and his fugitive writings during the first three years of his presidency—and we have remarkably complete documentation of everything

[1]Address before the Western Association of Princeton Clubs at Cleveland, May 19, 1906. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 491.

he did or said—contain little mention of current public affairs. His "single-track mind" was absorbed with his university work to the exclusion of almost everything else. It was not because public affairs were not interesting, for they were, intensely. Roosevelt had come in as President of the United States in 1901, and had been reëlected in 1904. It was the beginning of a mighty wave of national self-examination and of moral revolt. Problems of the accumulation of great wealth; problems, newly perceived, of the relationships of capital and labour; drab problems of graft and misgovernment in cities—all these were being widely and hotly discussed. It was the beginning of the period of the "muck-rakers." Miss Tarbell's *History of the Standard Oil Company* began in November, 1902; Lincoln Steffens's articles on the "Shame of the Cities" and the author's articles on problems of capital and labour, began in 1903. Riis's books were revealing vividly how the other half lives. Joseph Folk was rising in Missouri, Jerome in New York, and Hughes was soon to attack the management of great life insurance companies. Roosevelt, booted and spurred, rode the wild horses of reform.

We have evidence that the noise of all this hullaballoo penetrated the academic quietude of Princeton. The hard-driven new president not only heard it, but he knew what it meant. The nation, as he saw it, was drifting away from its old standards, the fine traditions of the early years. Wealth and luxury were beginning to corrupt the state. "Leaderless government"! What was to be done? He thought of it not at all in terms of his own ambitions or his own future: his only question, and he asked it over and over again in scores of lectures and addresses, concerned the duty of the university—Princeton University—in meeting the crisis. He saw in the furor for exposure, in the aimless resort to the violence of strikes and lockouts, not

less than in the vain panaceas of socialism, a vast amount of sheer emotional extravagance, "vague radicalism." The evils were real enough, but there was no solid, honest thinking about them. We find him urging over and over again that the university prepare men to think, to lead, to serve the state. It was for him the great central purpose of the university.

"In planning for Princeton . . . we are planning for the country."[1]

Everything must be unified and harmonized to that end. Anyone who dared interfere with that requirement was veritably threatening the safety of America. It would be difficult to overestimate the depth of his seriousness in considering this problem. Nor can the tenacity with which he fought for what he considered essential be understood without a clear comprehension of the passion of the man concerning these things. His addresses and notes for addresses are full of warnings and appeals. "Public statesmanship in a leaderless government. . . . For such the university should prepare."[2] He speaks on "The University and the Land We Live In" on March 22, 1905, and in an address on "The College Man in Municipal Politics"[3] he refers to the "need of university men as affairs thicken," discusses the "men of the Revolution," and sharply challenges the political methods and leadership of his own time. His purpose is still intellectual, not directly political, but the purpose of the intellectual discipline he is seeking is the service of the state. Again and again he put forth, in powerful words, the essence of this conviction:

". . . I try to join the function of the university with the great function of the national life. The life of this

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[1] "Princeton for the Nation's Service," October 25, 1902. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 443.

[2] Notes for an address on February 22, 1905.

[3] October 27, 1905.

country is going to be revolutionized and purified only when the universities of this country wake up to the fact that their only reason for existing is intellect, that the objects that I have set forth, so far as undergraduate life is concerned, are the only legitimate objects. And every man should crave for his university primacy in these things, primacy in other things also if they may be brought in without enmity to it, but the sacrifice of everything that stands in the way of that."[1]

In the winter of 1905–1906, he seems suddenly to have awakened to a fresh and powerful realization of the real conditions in the country, and a renewed sense of his own futility in meeting them. It was the first breathing spell of his university presidency. The new preceptorial system was working with unexpected smoothness and success, Merwick had been opened as a graduate college, money was coming in for new buildings. But he was suddenly impatient with it all. The university was not after all doing all that it should: it was not "sufficiently inspired," nor moving fast enough, nor useful enough. To outward view, progress had been astonishing, the success extraordinary, but it did not satisfy the insatiable spirit of the new president.

Whenever Wilson began to doubt, began to question whether or not he was doing all that he could or should in the pursuit of the vision which, if it inspired him, also scourged him, he worked harder than ever. He began now to make public addresses outside of college and alumni audiences, and to deal directly, and, it is hardly too much to say, passionately, with the problems of the day. One studies his record for the months from November, 1905, to May, 1906, with amazement—the sheer amount of the work he did in addition to the ordinary tasks of university administration, the addresses he delivered, the conferences

[1]Address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Yale University, 1908.

he held, the correspondence he carried on. A stanza written out in his own hand and left among the papers of that period expresses the spirit of the man:

> He only wins his freedom truly,
> Who daily wins it fresh and fair;
> He only rises ever newly
> Into the regions of the purer air
> Who falters not for blame or praise,
> But lives in strenuous and victorious days.

To mention only a few of his activities, we find him speaking as follows:

November 9, 1905, on "Princeton's Future" at Orange, New Jersey, expressing the need of driving forward the work of unifying all the forces of the university and stimulating the "obvious connection of the University with the world of progress."[1]

November 11, 1905, at Providence, Rhode Island, on "Liberal Education."

November 13, 1905, before the Monday Night Club, on "Princeton Ideals."

November 19, 1905, in Carnegie Hall, New York, at an "Interchurch conference." "The key to all youthful effort, ardour, devotion, self-slaying love. Devotion to what? To Christ: *What would Christ have done in our day, in our place with our opportunities?*"[2]

December 11, 1905 at Hartford, Connecticut, on "Methods and Ideals of University Instruction."[3]

December 14, 1905. His report, twenty printed pages, to the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

December 16, 1905, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, on Politics. "Governments should supply an equilibrium, not a disturbing force."[3]

[1] Woodrow Wilson's notes.

[2] *Ibid.*; his own italicizing.

[3] *Ibid.*; exact date uncertain.

January, 1906. He publishes "Notes on Constitutional Government" for use by his classes.

January 11, 1906, before the Philadelphian Society at Princeton, on "Newness of Spirit."

January 13, 1906, at a "Service to Dr. Harper." "Who is 'noble' amongst us? He who spends his energy outside the circle of self-interest."[1]

January 18, 1906, at Charleston, South Carolina, on "Americanism"—a powerful address. "The whole town," wrote Colonel J. C. Hemphill, editor of the *News & Courier*, "is still talking about your lecture as the best delivered in this place for many years."[2]

Wilson's speeches of this time seem to have had a peculiar power and passion. They made him everywhere converts and followers. Colonel Hemphill wrote for his own influential paper later that year an editorial headed "Wanted: a Leader," speaking of Woodrow Wilson as so far "the most promising of Southern candidates" for the Presidency.

January 27, 1906, at Brooklyn, New York, on "The University Man."

Here was a man with no political background whatever, no political experience, no political friends, no political organization, and yet people were beginning to think of him and suggest him for President of the United States. It was the sheer, unaided power and personality of the man. On February 3d occurred the famous dinner given in his honour at the Lotos Club of New York, in which he was more or less solemnly nominated by George Harvey. After defining all the possible ideal qualities of a leader, Harvey remarked:

"Such a man, it is my firm belief, and I venture ear-

[1] Woodrow Wilson's notes.

[2] Letter to Mr. Wilson, January 22, 1906.

nestly to insist, is to be found in Woodrow Wilson of Virginia and New Jersey.

"As one of a considerable number of Democrats who have become tired of voting Republican tickets, it is with a sense almost of rapture that I contemplate even the remotest possibility of casting a ballot for the president of Princeton University to become President of the United States."

Wilson's speech on this occasion was not one of his best, not, certainly, a political speech. What other American leader would have thought, upon such an occasion, of remarking that he had "learned a great deal more politics from the poets than from the systematic writers of politics," or who could list the qualities of "political workers" in a stanza from Tennyson?

> Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
> Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
> Some patient force to change them when we will,
> Some civic manhood firm against the crowd.

It was all far enough from the "hard-boiled" politics of 1906—but somehow the man gave strange evidence of power, passion.

To Wilson, these early suggestions of political preferment were mere "after-dinner courtesies." He did not take them seriously.

"I feel that the guise of greatness with which he has clothed me is perhaps a very transparent disguise. . . ."[1]

On the morning after Harvey's speech at the Lotos Club, Dr. Axson went up to luncheon at Prospect. Wilson had just returned from New York, and Axson met him coming down the stairs. Axson said:

"I see you have been nominated for President of the United States!"

[1]Speech at the Lotos Club, referring to the introduction of the chairman.

Mrs. Wilson was just behind and inquired, "Was Mr. Harvey joking?"

Wilson responded: "He didn't seem to be joking."[1]

In March, he wrote to his friend Dr. Hazen of Middletown:

"I am not taking at all seriously the suggestion made by Colonel Harvey, and am only afraid that the discussion will be carried so far as to be a little embarrassing."

But there was a surprising reaction, both in the press and in private letters. Harvey further developed his thesis in his publication, *Harper's Weekly:*

"It was not a hasty or ill-considered utterance. And yet, though based upon earnest conviction and due reflection, there was no expectation that such a suggestion at this early day would evoke substantial response. That it has done so justifies a reference to the subject in these columns. Elsewhere we reprint some of the journalistic comments based upon the meagre reports in the daily papers. In a more personal way, verbally and by letter, we have received a surprising number of approving messages, which we are not now at liberty to quote."[2]

Wilson's own correspondence of the time is evidence of the thorough-going belief of many Americans, not friends alone, of his availability. Here is a letter from a Kentuckian, a complete stranger:

"Dr. Wilson, please be president, and let us have less of strenuosity and more of Washingtonism, fewer victories, and more justice and mercy.

"Your urged candidacy revives my political interest which has been dead 46 years."[3]

It is important here to call attention to this early and surprising talk of Wilson's availability for leadership; the

[1]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[2]March 10, 1906.

[3]R. H. Fitzhugh, March 15, 1906.

detailed narrative of his political rise, a fascinating story, must await treatment in another chapter. While he did not take it seriously, it added greatly to the burden of his work; it increased the demands upon his time; it swelled his large correspondence. More than all this, it had a powerfully stimulating effect upon his ardent, high-strung nature. It drove him harder than ever to the pursuit of his vision: a university which should produce leaders and statesmen. As in all the previous crises in his life, it also seemed to have a religious side. We find him speaking again and again that winter and spring on religious subjects or to religious gatherings. Many of his other addresses breathe a religious aspiration. One of his notable speeches, an appeal for leadership by the minister in his community, was delivered at Hartford, March 30, 1906.

He was also thinking hard again on the wider aspects of American politics. Now that he saw more clearly the nature of the problems of the country, he was becoming more and more interested in Thomas Jefferson. On April 16th, he delivered before the Democratic Club of New York his first speech on Jefferson. His notes give evidence of the hard thought he had applied to the subject. He rewrote very rarely, and most of his notes are extremely brief, but he made no fewer than four versions of this address—one in shorthand, three in his own handwriting or on his own typewriter. It marks a decided departure from his earlier views when he had spoken of his admiration for Hamilton, and was freely critical of Jefferson. He lays down the two great Jeffersonian principles as he sees them and calls for their application to the problems of the day:

"1. The people as the source and their interests and desires as the text of laws and institutions.

"2. Individual liberty as the object of all law."

In May, he made a remarkable address before the

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Western Association of Princeton Clubs at Cleveland, Ohio. Dean West was also there and spoke. Wilson's speech was remarkable because it set forth with such clarity the veritable soul of the man. He expressed his own concern over the situation in the nation:

"When I look about upon the generation in which we live, I, like every man who looks with thoughtful eyes upon it, am very much sobered by what I see; not disconcerted, not robbed of hope, not cooled even in my optimism, but nevertheless very much sobered by the seriousness of the task which confronts us."[1]

He makes an eloquent appeal for a new devotion to ideals, the ideals he himself is trying to encourage at Princeton:

"And so, gentlemen, the ideals that we talk about, the ideals that we try to translate into definite programmes of study, are not things which we can take or leave as we please, unless you believe that we can take or leave life itself as we please. There is no choice in the matter. I am not daunted by the prediction that we are going to be submerged in waves of materialism, because any man who has read never so superficially the history of the race knows that there are certain things that cannot be absolutely submerged or crushed. If there remain any little band of men keeping the true university spirit alive, that band will, after a while, seem to be all that there is of a great nation, so far as the historian is concerned."[2]

In a fine speech following that of President Wilson, Dean West emphasized and commended Wilson's programme:

"I honour President Wilson most for perceiving the right direction in which to head our universities, for sailing

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 494.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 497.

by chart and compass, and not by mere drifting, for nailing his flag to the mast and for calling upon every son of Princeton to stand by us as we go ahead. . . .

"As President Wilson has said, when you settle what the chief end of life is, you have settled everything else. There is not a view on education, whether true or false, that must not be tested by that."

Wilson's view of "the chief end of life" was clear enough. It was to discipline men to serve the state, devotedly, religiously, loyally.

For months Wilson had continued such labours as these with unremitting zeal. He seemed possessed! He devoted to a single address a passion of intensity that would have served half a dozen ordinary speeches. It was what made him so invariably effective, but it took his life blood. His friends for years had been warning him, reminding him that he was none too vigorous physically, urging him to guard his health.

"I hope that . . . you . . . will not jeopardize your health by attempting too much. You are too valuable to Princeton and to us to risk the work of the next twenty years for a single speech or journey."[1]

One morning in May, 1906, not long after his return from the great effort at Cleveland, he found, upon awakening, that he could not see out of his left eye. He had been suffering for some time from neuritis of the left shoulder and leg, often suffering great pain—which he had disregarded. His right hand had also been affected. His friend Professor Hibben came over immediately and accompanied him to Philadelphia to consult the famous Dr. de Sweinitz. After a thorough examination by two doctors, he was told that he had arterio-sclerosis and that he must give up everything and henceforward live a quiet and retired life.

[1]M. Taylor Pyne to Woodrow Wilson, March 5, 1903.

It can be better imagined than described what such a catastrophe meant to a man of Wilson's temperament. All his plans and aspirations seemed—at first—swept at one blow into the dust. He was caught at the climax of his career, when every avenue of achievement seemed opening before him. He was at the point of realizing, as never before, the ideal university of his vision. People were talking of him for the Presidency! Worse in some ways than his own tragedy was the effect he knew it would have upon Mrs. Wilson, who was utterly bound up in his life. We know, from the evidence of friends, how deep the tragedy went, but an examination of Wilson's letters of the time discloses not one word of discouragement, not a single complaint. The man met his fate with his head up, and his jaw firm. Deep down in his nature lay the bed rock of his Calvinistic faith. What God willed was well.

Subsequent examinations were more reassuring than the early diagnosis, but Mrs. Wilson could still feel "overwhelmed."

". . . I know now more exactly than I did . . . what is really threatening Woodrow. It is hardening of the arteries: due to prolonged high pressure on brain and nerves. He has lived too tensely . . .

"Of course, it is an awful thing—a dying by inches,—and incurable. But Woodrow's condition has been discovered in the very early stages and they think it has already been 'arrested.' But I will quote for your satisfaction a letter of Dr. Stengel's: 'I find a very moderate grade of arterial trouble and of a character that does not suggest any progressive course as likely in the near future. You were fortunate in having the local (ocular) trouble because it called attention to the general condition which would otherwise have passed unnoticed. I feel entirely confident that a rest of three months will restore you fully.

Of course 50 year old arteries do not go back to an earlier condition, but I expect that you will be as well as you need be for any work you can reasonably wish to undertake next Fall. The warning simply indicates that excess of work is dangerous. You have doubtless done too much in the last few years.'"[1]

He goes about the business of cancelling his engagements, assuming that he would need only the summer for recovery.

"I have just had the misfortune to suffer a hemorrhage of one of the blood vessels of my left eye and the doctor tells me that it is absolutely necessary that I should give the eye rest for the entire summer."[2]

He closes up his university work, sees that his friend Hibben—Dean Fine being absent—is appointed acting president in his place, writes a message to be read before the graduating class at Commencement, and sails for Europe with his family.

His breakdown called forth a warmth of sympathy on all sides that testified to the place he had made for himself at Princeton. Friends overwhelmed him with messages and letters.

"Don't forget that you are enjoined by the Board to recover your health, and stay away until that is *un fait accompli*."[3]

The alumni at the Commencement sent this message to Mr. Wilson:

"We, the Alumni of Princeton University assembled at the 159th Commencement beg to express our great joy that our prayer for your speedy and complete recovery is being answered, and to assure you of our unceasing de-

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[1]Letter from Ellen Axson Wilson to Miss Florence Hoyt, June 27, 1906.

[2]Letter to President Nicholas Murray Butler, June 1, 1906, explaining that he might not be able to prepare a course of lectures which had been planned.

[3]Cleveland Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, June 14, 1906.

sires for your good health and the long continuance of your valued services to our Alma Mater."[1]

The trustees passed a resolution expressing their solicitude:

"Resolved that we desire to express our solicitude on account of the condition of President Wilson's health which deprives him of active participation in our Commencement activities. And in recognition of the fact that this condition is the direct result of close application and unremitting devotion to his labours in behalf of the University we request, and especially enjoin it upon him, that he prolong his vacation to such an extent, as to time and manner of enjoyment, as may promise the complete restoration of his health and vigour."

Quite naturally, Wilson went with his family to the place that, next to his own Princeton, he loved most of all —Rydal, in the lake country of England. Here, in Loughrigg Cottage on the banks of the lovely Rothay River, he spent a quiet summer. At first he was not allowed to read, nor even to write much, for his hand was "cramped." As he grew stronger, he began to walk by Grasmere or up the Nab Scar path. On Sundays he went to the little old church where Wordsworth is buried, returning by way of Dove Cottage.

On one of his early walks he stopped on Pelter Bridge to watch the Rothay running under, and there met an odd-looking, interesting man, who said to him:

"Is this Professor Wilson?" and immediately introduced himself.

"My names is Yates. We live near here. We are poor, but thank God, not respectable."[2]

It was Fred Yates, a portrait painter. The two men seem to have fallen in love on the spot. A friendship grew

[1]June 12, 1906.

[2]Miss Margaret Wilson to the author.

up between the families that lasted all their lives. There was constant and delightful visiting back and forth. Mary Yates, a daughter, became a great friend of the Wilson sisters, and so much devoted to Mr. Wilson that she stood behind the door when he was sitting to her father for his portrait just to hear the talk, and wrote down in her diary the stories he told! She gives a glimpse of the life during the summer:

"Sometimes Mr. Wilson read aloud during the sittings —Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, and once, Browning's 'Saul'—and sometimes, after supper, descended, with delightful boyishness, to yards of the college songs common to Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. One of these that we particularly enjoyed was

> "The man that hath some good peanuts
> And giveth his neighbour none,
> He shan't have any of my peanuts
> When his peanuts are gone.

"There were verses with such trimmings as 'The man that hath some good fresh-roasted California peanuts'—the words came out with almost acrobatic precision—and then the triumphant arrival at 'Oh, that'll be joyful,' when the exactions of enunciation, along with the 'peanuts,' were 'gone'!"

Yates's portrait of Wilson, completed in a later visit at Rydal in 1908, hangs in Nassau Hall at Princeton. Yates visited the Wilsons afterward in America and was once at the White House. The two men had an abiding affection for each other. Wilson wrote the Yateses after his return to America in 1906:

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"It is exactly a month to-day since we sailed from Glasgow. You have been in our thoughts constantly, and with every thought went deep abiding affection. It would be

hard to say now what a mere summer in the dear Lake District would have done for me if I had got mere rest and recreation. It is always affection that heals me, and the dear friendships I made were my real tonic and restorative. It would be hard to overstate what 'the dear Yates' did for me; and I shall forever bless them and seek them as I turn hither and thither in my journey."

The summer had been in every way profitable. He had soon begun to mend in health. We have delightful glimpses of the life at Rydal in daily letters to his wife while she was travelling in other parts of England:

"... we are both well.[1] I still think that I can see more with my left eye, and for the rest I am absolutely all right."[2]

"Nothing happens to us and we are very happy. It rains too constantly for long walks, but the afternoons are beautiful and we get out for short ones between showers. I still sit for my picture, and it is beginning to come into shape in a very interesting way. I think it will be strongly individual and unusual and that you will like it very much. I sit three hours at a time, and usually Mrs. Yates is with us."[3]

"What a pure delight your sweet letters are. . . . The air of enjoyment, of excitement among beautiful and noble things, which they breathe fills me with a peace and delight it would be hard for me to find words for. . . .

"It did not exactly clear up yesterday afternoon, but it at least *held* up, and dear Margaret and I walked over to service at Grasmere. They had the evening service in all its simplicity, and it was very sweet and soothing. The somewhat simple-minded young man who conducted the

[1]Miss Margaret Wilson stayed with her father, while the two younger sisters accompanied their mother.

[2]August 21, 1906.

[3]August 25, 1906.

service preached on Elijah! . . . Our walk home in the waning twilight, with the mountains *very* solemn about us gave the proper final touch to our spirits. We had supper, counted the clothes for the laundry, and went to bed with peaceful, quiet minds."[1]

"My worthless pen hand will not hold out to write much, but all that it does write will please you. The eye doctor is evidently very well pleased—agreeably surprised—at the condition of the eye, and my blood-pressure, general-condition doctor is inclined to think that it would be rather better for me to go back to (moderate) work than not to go. He wants to see me again, however, after a week's trial of certain medicine, before giving his final decision. He was *very* encouraging."[2]

"After looking me over very carefully and thoughtfully, Dr. Boyd said that he thought that it would probably be better for a man of my temperament to go back to work than to lead an aimless and perhaps anxious year on this side the water; and he said that, with proper moderation in work, I could return with perfect safety."[3]

His friends in America urged him to stay on for a year.

"A letter from Dr. Jacobus to-day also bids me stay through the winter! Alas, I do not see how I could. He admits Pyne put him up to it."[4]

But he is already chafing to return. He has not by any means been idle. He has been thinking deeply and quietly about the future of the university, what must be done next in order to bring all the forces of its life into the perfect unity he desired.

On October 6th, the family sailed for home.

"The doctors not only consent: they think it best,

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[1]August 27, 1906.

[2]August 31, 1906.

[3]September 2, 1906.

[4]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, August 28, 1906.

provided I take decent care of myself. You may imagine how happy their decision makes me. . . . I left the doctors absolutely free to say whether I should return now or not. They were keen enough to see that for a man of my disposition several months of idleness over here would be so irksome as to be positively hurtful unless I knew them to be necessary; and they did not think them necessary. They thought, on the contrary, that equable and reasonable work would be good for me. I have promised them, moreover, to take special care of myself next winter: to break the year with a little vacation in Florida, to make as few outside engagements as possible, and keep myself within bounds while at home. I have every disposition to obey them! I love my work too much to be willing to run the risk of rendering myself unfit for it!"[1]

Although he had promised to be careful, he plunged again upon his return into the work at Princeton with immense enthusiasm. He could not yet see clearly—he was destined to spend all the remainder of his life with a restricted vision of the left eye—and he had not fully recovered the control of his hand. He had a pen with a large holder made, several times the ordinary size, to relieve the pain which writing gave him. But he began a physical discipline not short of heroic in order that he might continue his work. He cut away unnecessary or exhausting engagements, insisted upon uninterrupted sleep at night, learned methods for doing his work swiftly and with absolute system—"never doing anything twice"—and thus conserved his powers. There was so much to be done! And so few men who could do it!

"We have settled to our winter's life. The first week was a tremendous one. The Board of Trustees of the University met in quarterly meeting, and there was one continuous rush of business, expected and unexpected, from

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Cleveland H. Dodge, September 16, 1906.

the time I set foot in Princeton until the Board had adjourned. And even then the tide merely ran in another direction. There were four months of business to catch up with, and all sorts of questions faced me which had all the vacation through been lying in wait for me. I did not take a long breath for two weeks. And then I had to start on a long journey."[1]

Wilson's friends, aroused at last by the burdens he was bearing, insisted upon his having regular secretarial assistance. He had previously done most of his heaviest labour by his own hand or on his own typewriter—with the intermittent help of student secretaries. In the fall of 1906, Gilbert F. Close came to him as an assistant, and he established a new office in the Tower of '79 Hall.

Problems began at once to crowd upon him. During the summer he had been developing new plans for the "social coördination" of the university—the "quads"—which he was to present formally in December. He was also under pressure to take part in the politics of the state of New Jersey.

"I have so far escaped actual entanglement in politics, though the meshes were spread for me by wireless telegraphy before I landed. An effort more serious than I had anticipated was made to induce me to become a candidate for the Senate; but grace was given me and I declined. I hope that that will quiet other dangers."[2]

The graduate college question was growing more complicated. During the summer Dean West had received a call to the presidency of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It presented a hard problem for Wilson. He quite frankly distrusted West, but on the other hand recognized his value as the leader in the graduate college project. Wilson's conception of the university was of a

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Fred Yates, November 6, 1906.

[2]*Ibid.*

rounded whole, each part serving and stimulating the others; the graduate college was a vital interest but secondary to the more important undergraduate programme. There were twelve hundred undergraduate students, about forty graduate students. Dean West on the other hand had come, quite naturally, since it was his own field, to concentrate his interest on the graduate college. Now that the preceptorial system had been successfully launched, he felt that the time for pushing his own plans had arrived. There was unfortunately—as we have already pointed out—a twilight zone between the authority of the president and that of the dean which the Board of Trustees had permitted, if not encouraged. Wilson felt that West's ambitions, then only partly revealed, threatened not only the intellectual but the administrative unity of the university.

Some of the members of the Board of Trustees and some of Wilson's friends hoped that West would accept the proffered presidency at Boston and thus ease a situation at Princeton that was full of possibilities of trouble. When the Board of Trustees met in October, West made a strong appeal for "this great Graduate College, which, if secured, will confer on Princeton splendid, genuine, and enduring distinction." His enthusiasm as well as his knowledge of graduate college affairs made his retention at Princeton seem of importance to many of the Board of Trustees who knew nothing of the growing divergencies of view. As for Wilson, he hated all his life a personal issue. He felt that mere personal differences of view should never enter into the discussion of large issues. "Principle" should rule. He therefore joined in urging West to remain; even writing the resolution himself.

"The Board has particularly counted upon him to put into operation the Graduate College which he conceived and for which it has planned."[2]

While Wilson plainly felt that he was master of the situation and could make his vision prevail, some of his friends wanted reassurance that West's continuation was "on the basis of a thorough understanding of the position which he occupies in relation to your Presidency of the University."[1]

A few days later, Jacobus wrote expressing his own confidence and loyalty and setting forth the "conviction of the Graduate School Committee that the President is the head of the University and that whatever may be our ideals for the Graduate Department, it is to be recognized as but a part of the University organization and its interests as subordinate to those of the institution in general."[2]

Here was the clearest recognition of the real situation. But there can be no doubt that Dean West felt that the action of the Board in urging him to remain at Princeton was one of approval and support.

"I have not asked, nor have I been tendered any terms for remaining in Princeton, beyond the cordial and unanimous assurances of the President and Trustees that a renewed and determined effort will be made to secure the Graduate College."[3]

He was now to press harder than ever for the early realization of his plans, and to depart further from Wilson's vision of a unified university. Wilson, however, continued to insist stoutly upon his original contention that the graduate college should form an intimate part of the university.

Here were all the materials for the first-class controversy soon to arise!

Wilson felt that his own course was clear: to go straight

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[1]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, November 4, 1906.

[2]*Ibid.*, November 9, 1906.

[3]"The Proposed Graduate College," pp. 23–24.

through. To make over Princeton according to his vision —"for the service of the Nation"! In a brief address that winter—the first upon a religious subject since his return —he set forth "an entire philosophy of life," and this was it:

"The object,—not money, nor praise, nor success, but service,—if possible, *constructive* service."[1]

[1]Woodrow Wilson's notes.

CHAPTER XVI

THE QUAD STRUGGLE

"My own ideals for the University are those of genuine democracy and serious scholarship. The two, indeed, seem to me to go together. Any organization which introduces elements of social exclusiveness constitutes the worst possible soil for serious intellectual endeavour."

Letter of Woodrow Wilson, February 1, 1910.

". . . college life, in our day, has become so absorbing a thing and so interesting a thing, that college work has fallen into the background."

Address at the inauguration of President H. H Apple at Franklin and Marshall College, January 10, 1910.

". . . after all, gentlemen, a University has as its only legitimate object intellectual attainment. I do not mean that there should not go along with that a great deal that is delightful in the way of comradeship; but I am sure that men never thoroughly enjoy each other if they merely touch superficially. I do not believe that men ever thoroughly know or enjoy each other until they lay their minds alongside each other and make real test of their quality."

Address before the University Club in Chicago, March 12, 1908.

I. THE PROBLEM

WILSON began his fight for the social coördination of Princeton University at a meeting of the Board of Trustees, December 13, 1906.

He had returned from his long vacation in Europe with the batteries of his purpose newly charged. After every such rest, where his mind had gone free among beautiful things, he returned with the poet and the prophet in him, to say nothing of the crusader, restored and strengthened. The ideal after all *was* true. Visions *were* real. Service was the ultimate of life, not success.

He had been thinking of the university all summer. He had gone far, in the four years of his presidency, toward revolutionizing educational practices, keying up the intellectual life. Everything he had suggested had been adopted—had been successful. But the reintegration was not complete. He had brought masters and scholars together in an extraordinary new and fertile relationship, but the influences which decentralized the university were still more potent than those which united it. When social ambitions and excitements, absorbing "outside activities", sports, swallowed up such a proportion of the student's life, how create a keen intellectual impetus? When college life was capriciously divided into clubs and cliques, how could there be that intense spirit of devotion and loyalty which the ideal university should arouse? If such undemocratic divisions existed during the all-important years of college life, how train leaders to meet the difficulties threatening the democratic traditions of the nation?

He had seen the problem on its purely educational side many years before. He never came to action without long-matured thought. The essence of his vision of "Princeton in the nation's service" was "a common training which will enable them [the students] to hold together in a community of thought." What he was seeking as early as 1893 and 1894 was "an ideal principle of unity," that the university might be devoted with an undivided spirit to the service of the nation. These were no mere words with him: they were intense and vital convictions.

"There is laid upon us the compulsion of the national life. We dare not keep aloof and closet ourselves while a nation comes to its maturity."[1]

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[1] "Princeton in the Nation's Service," delivered at the Sesquicentennial celebration, October 21, 1896. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, p. 284.
See Wilson's educational addresses 1893–1896, *passim*.

As early as 1897—some ten years before he made his formal "quad" proposal—he had clearly formulated the details of his vision of what one should do if "authorized to transform this place." He did not then dream of ever having the opportunity, but he outlined his plans to Stockton Axson.

First, reform the curriculum. This had now been done.

Second, introduce a tutorial system. This also had been done.

"Third, I should break the university up into groups, with lines cut perpendicularly down through the four classes, bringing freshmen and sophomores into close living conditions with juniors and seniors, and with unmarried members of the faculty. Thus education would become a life process. As things now stand, the freshmen and sophomores are deliberately cut off from communication with upper classmen. It is a vicious plan because it separates the lower classmen from the very men who could most influence and vitalize them. A senior can often do more with a freshman than can any member of the faculty. The difference in their ages is enough to promote hero worship in the younger men, not enough to debar them from free and easy intellectual companionship."[1]

It was upon this third step in his programme that he had been thinking since he had completed the organization of the preceptorial system. He had even begun to talk about it, guardedly, at meetings of alumni as at Orange (New Jersey) November, 1905.

In February, 1906, he was again referring anxiously to the social situation:

"What is the future of the Upper Class Clubs? More and more expense and only social aims or University aims?

[1]Professor Stockton Axson, in a memorandum prepared for the author.

"Danger that we will develop *socially* as Harvard did and as Yale is tending to do.
"Effect on the under classes."[1]

By September, he wrote to his friend, Cleveland Dodge:

"The summer has brought to maturity the plans for the University which have for years been in the back of my head but which never before got room enough to take their full growth. I feel richer for the summer, not only in health but also in thought and in ability to be of service. A year such as I have planned next year to be ought to set all sorts of processes in order, and that without undue strain on me."[2]

While his interest in these problems was still primarily educational, his objective, as always, was the service of the nation. The nation was without leadership when it was the function of a university to provide that leadership. Instead of stemming the tide, the university was drifting with it. The same rapid changes in social life, the same decay of democracy, seemed to be going on inside the university as out. Privilege was inevitably and rapidly creeping in. Luxury was increasing.

The town of Princeton itself had been swiftly changing. The simple village of the '90's when fields of grain stretched away from the house the Wilsons built, when the standard of living accurately corresponded with the modest salaries of college professors, had been putting on new airs! Wealthy alumni had converted certain of the old estates into gracious and ample country places. Grover Cleveland had lent distinction to the town by making it his home. The change, of course, was not peculiar to Princeton: it was common to America.

It was mirrored in the life of the university. Greek letter

[1] Notes for address dated February 17, 1906.
[2] September 16, 1906.

fraternities had been repressed by the firm Scotch hand of Dr. McCosh: but in their place innocent little eating clubs had sprung up. They were spontaneous and temporary organizations of congenial spirits. Wilson himself as a student had belonged to "The Alligators." Presently they began—the "Ivy" first—to perpetuate themselves as permanent organizations of upper-class students, filling the ranks left vacant each year by departing seniors with men chosen from the sophomore class. There was nothing whatever vicious or underhanded in the movement. It was a natural development. As they grew stronger and their alumni began to prosper in the world, the clubs built beautiful homes—the "Ivy," the "Cap and Gown," the "Colonial," "Tiger Inn," and others—each endeavouring to outdo its rivals. Prospect Avenue, the principal home of the clubs, became one of the show places of the town.

We may sigh as we like about the ways of human nature—there they are! Draw a line between those who "belong" and those who sit in outer darkness, and it tends more and more to absorb the thought of the community which it concerns. To "make a club," let alone *the* club, soon became one of the supreme concerns of lower classmen. From a fourth to a third of the sophomores knew that they must be left out each year. Boys entered as freshmen with club membership set before them as one of the chief prizes of college life. Parents even came to Princeton to help pave the way for their sons into the social niche which they coveted. Sophomore and even freshman clubs sprang up as "followings" for the upper-class societies, and the rivalries absorbed more and more of the time and thought of the students. To wear a peculiar hatband was more important than proficiency in mathematics or Latin. If freshmen and sophomores did not traverse Prospect Avenue lest they appear to be "boot-licking,"[2]

club politics nevertheless permeated the life of the place. During the spring "campaign" leading up to "bicker week," legitimate university work was all but forgotten in the intensity of the struggle of the clubs. And what heartburnings resulted from being left out in the cold! Some students who failed of election left college.

The clubs themselves considered many of the tendencies unfortunate and made treaties with one another and coöperated with the university authorities to lessen the effect of the rivalries upon lower classmen, but they themselves, under the compulsions of rivalry, could not resist the tendency toward more exclusiveness, more luxury, more politics in seeking under classmen who were known for their family connections or their money, or as athletes, or as "socially desirable."

What Wilson felt, and felt deeply, was that "the side shows," as he expressed it, "were swallowing up the circus."

It was not indeed a condition peculiar to Princeton. It was more or less common to the colleges of America. It was causing concern to every thoughtful educator. College was becoming more and more a place to give a man "social background" rather than a real education. Charles Francis Adams had made a notable address at Columbia[1] calling attention to the evils and advocating a plan similar to that proposed later by Wilson. We shall see how thoroughly most of the thoughtful elements at Princeton itself—from students to trustees—agreed with Wilson upon the reality of the evils he attacked.[2] They accepted his diagnosis, as the world outside was accepting the diagnosis of the political reformers. Conditions were utterly wrong,

[1] June 12, 1906.

[2] R. E. Annin, in his *Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 21–22, shows that there was a good deal of earnest discussion on the club question in 1905–1906; various proposals were put forward.

but how cure them? Educators might fume, but who dared touch the sacred social fabric of the university?

Many times in his life Wilson quoted as "no bad motto" this passage from Burke:

"Public duty demands and requires, that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated."

It was the spirit that dominated his life: to make the right prevalent, to defeat the wrong.

Accordingly, he struck straight at the system, with all the audacity of his nature. Not only did he lay bare the evils—all the timid educators were doing that!—but he set forth his remedy, committed himself to it, and asked its acceptance. He had thought upon it until it seemed not only right in itself but reasonable and practicable.

It was, then, at the trustees' meeting, December 13, 1906, that Wilson launched his proposals.

He began by giving, in his regular annual report, a glowing account of the success of the new preceptorial system which had now had "a full year's test." "There has been a general intellectual quickening." He reported satisfactory progress with "our plans for a graduate college," referring to the "life at Merwick under Mr. Butler and Dean West" as being a wise and fruitful development. He spoke at length of the bequest of $250,000 which was shortly to come from the estate of Mrs. Josephine E. Thomson Swann to construct a graduate college.

"Wisely planned and placed, Thomson College will always stand as one of the ornaments of our campus, and as a most interesting evidence of Mrs. Swann's generosity and foresight."

Here, as always, he voiced his conception of the graduate college as occupying a place on the campus, knit into the work of the university, an element in the unified plan he had in mind from the beginning.

With everything thus in good order, he felt that he could safely launch his own new proposals. He reserved these matters, however, for a supplementary report.

"The questions I am about to broach and their proper solution have been taking form in my mind for many years, and the suggestions I am about to make, though heretical in character, are the fruit of very mature consideration."

We know the great care he had given to this report: we have not only his preliminary notes, but a complete copy in shorthand. He set forth at length and with great vigour of emphasis, the situation he saw developing—"disintegration" and "demoralization."

> "The Upper Class Clubs—decrease of democratic, increase of social feeling—Increase of luxury—the buildings etc.
>
> "*Remedy*—We must *reintegrate*—and create a *college* comradeship based on *letters*. We have tutor and pupil. Now we must have pupil and pupil in a comradeship of studies."[1]

"Everywhere I go through the country, graduates of the University and not least those who were themselves members of clubs when they were in Princeton, express their deep concern at the growth of what they, with perhaps some exaggeration, call the luxury of life at the clubs, as they erect more and more costly buildings and add this, that and the other elaboration to their lives. More serious than these things is the slow, almost imperceptible and yet increasing certainty of the decline of the old democratic spirit of the place. . . ."

He then outlined his plan for meeting the situation:

"The remedy I suggest is, to make the undergraduates

[1]Notes for the supplementary report to the Board of Trustees.

live together, not in clubs but in colleges. I propose that we divide the University into colleges and that the strong upperclass clubs themselves become colleges under the guidance of the University. By a college I mean not merely a group of dormitories, but an eating hall as well with all its necessary appointments where all the residents of the college shall take their meals together. I would have over each college a master and two or three resident preceptors, and I would have these resident members of the faculty take their meals in hall with the undergraduates. But I would suggest that the undergraduates of each college be given a large share of the self-government in the spirit of our later development, so that the rules of college life should be administered, if not formulated, by committees upon which the undergraduates should have full representation. Each college would thus form a unit in itself, and largely a self-governing unit."

Wilson felt, in suggesting this remedy, that he was asking nothing revolutionary. He was merely recognizing one of the more or less natural and instinctive efforts of the students to counterbalance the huge numerical growth of American universities—common to all of them—by setting up manageable units of the spirit to replace the small college with its closer associations. Wilson was proposing to take these clubs, which were not evil in themselves, and convert them into colleges within the university—thus utilizing their benefits and at the same time robbing them of the features which made them undesirable—the privilege, the exclusiveness, the rivalries, the luxury. His idea at this time was that the change would be neither expensive nor very difficult.

"The changes necessary to effect the transition would be, in form at any rate, very slight."

It was all so clear and reasonable to him! So desirable! And he had such confidence in the devotion and loyalty

of both students and alumni, once they should see the need of it, that the difficulties in the way did not seem serious. He was always expecting human beings to act upon the highest motives—and for public rather than private ends. It was one of the great elements of his power as a leader —as it was of his weakness!

The Board listened to Wilson's earnest plea with evident sympathy. Those who were closest to the life of the university were well aware of the evils; and were anxious that something be done about them.

"You placed before us to-day one of the most significant measures ever taken under the thought of the Board. Have no question as to its ultimate successful working out; it only needs a wise and patient handling."[1]

A committee was appointed to consider the whole subject, with Wilson as the chairman. The other members were Pyne, Jacobus, Henry, David B. Jones, Dodge, and Garrett.

Almost immediately, however, Grover Cleveland, Dean West's most intimate friend and supporter, began to take alarm. He saw in the new movement a further delay in the development of the graduate college in which he was interested beyond anything else. Less than a week after the Board meeting, Cleveland Dodge wrote to Wilson:

"Mr. Cleveland sent for me this morning and asked me to come up and see him at the Equitable Building. . . . I found that he was a good deal worried about your plans for the development of the University into colleges, fearing that it might postpone indefinitely the interest in the Graduates' School. I assured him that all of us, and especially yourself, were deeply interested in the Graduates' School, and I knew that you had no intention of doing anything to injure that plan."[2]

[1]Letter from Dr. Melancthon W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, December 13, 1906.
[2]December 19, 1906.

Wilson replied immediately:

"There need be no antagonism at all between the plans I suggested to the Board and the plans we had already set our heart upon."[1]

Indeed, he felt that with the Swann bequest in hand, the graduate college was satisfactorily on its way; and at that time he anticipated no serious obstacle to the changes he himself was proposing, if dealt with promptly. As he had told the trustees:

"These elements . . . are, I believe, susceptible of being dealt with and removed now without serious friction and with the best feeling on all sides; I am not sure that they would be a year or two hence."

Moreover, he believed that the "reintegration," the establishment of "complete unity" in the undergraduate work of the university must be the basis of everything. It was far more important to have conditions right for twelve hundred undergraduate students than for fifty graduates.

But Grover Cleveland and Dean West plainly expected a wholly clear field and united support for their project. They understood, not without some justification, that the graduate college was the "next thing on the programme"; they did not accept Wilson's assurances that the two proposals could be carried along together.

It soon appeared, moreover, that there was no common understanding as to *what* was to be done or *how*. Wilson had believed for years in a graduate college, believed in it as firmly as Dean West—believed, just as Dean West had believed, that it should have a place on the campus and be securely knit into the general university life, a "community of spirit," so that the graduate group, presumably more serious in its purposes, would assist in building up the keen intellectual interest throughout the entire

[1]Letter to Cleveland H. Dodge, December 20, 1906.

university which he was seeking. But Dean West's ideas had been gradually changing and enlarging. He was beginning to advocate a graduate college set apart from the general university scheme, both physically and intellectually. It was plain also that he wished to bring the whole project more completely under his own personal domination, separate it from the unified control of the university. He had been given great powers by the trustees in 1901: he was seeking to exercise them. It is scarcely necessary to point out that Wilson considered that both of these tendencies made for the "disintegration" and "decentralization" of the university, which above everything he was seeking to combat.

Here, then, were antagonistic ideas, not only as to policy, but as to executive control. A clash was inevitable.

Cleveland and West were determined men, and both felt that the project which they had most at heart was being sidetracked by Wilson's new proposals. If the dean stood in any need of the fresh avowal of Cleveland's support in the graduate college project, it came in a letter of March 23, 1907, a few days after the spring meeting of the Board at which Wilson reported orally on the quad committee's work. Cleveland wrote:

"I have just returned from my Southern trip.

"While absent I have had much in my mind a matter in which you and I are deeply interested, and which has been very frequently discussed between us. You know that I as Chairman of the Committee of University Trustees having the interest of our Graduate School in charge, have never wavered in the belief that you as Dean of the School, and I as Chairman of the Trustees' Committee, would realize our high hopes for the complete success of the project."

The two men seemed thus to look upon the graduate school with an almost proprietary interest—as a project

quite largely apart from the general university scheme. It was another indication of what Dr. Jacobus, in November, had feared—a tendency upon the part of Dean West to draw away from the unified control by the president of all university affairs.

It is reasonably certain that the dean's intentions in this regard were deliberate. Cleveland's case was different. He knew comparatively little of educational matters, and what he had learned was acquired principally while a resident of Princeton, and from Dean West. Apparently, Cleveland never realized that West's purpose was to set himself up in a semi-independent sphere over the affairs of the graduate school. Cleveland would never have tolerated such a decentralization under his own jurisdiction while President of the United States, and it is quite certain he would not have approved a similar movement at Princeton had he been fully aware of it. While Cleveland was plainly displeased at Wilson's injection of the quad question into the scheme of things at this time, their personal relations seem to have remained pleasant. Wilson had been a steadfast supporter of Cleveland during his Presidency and had received him cordially into the Princeton circle, though without adulation.[1]

All the elements of a first-class struggle were embedded in these misunderstandings, these radical differences of view; the rift was to widen steadily.

In January, Wilson, mindful of his promise to the doctors, had sailed for Bermuda for a month of "rest." With all of his university work, his addresses in various parts of the country, the necessity of dealing sharply with the demand that he become a candidate for Senator from New Jersey, added to the growing discussion of the quads, he was again seriously overworking.

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[1]Professor Winthrop M. Daniels and Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

His letters for the first few days of his vacation are full of delight with the strange and exotic place.

"It is mid-June here, warm and soft and languid, the white limestone houses and white streets shining intensely in the vivid sun and everybody in summer garb. . . . Nations and all big affairs of whatever kind seem here remote and theoretical. What have *we* to do with such things on this little island far out at sea?"[1]

But his idea of a "complete rest" was peculiar! In the single month he outlined almost all of a series of lectures to be delivered at Columbia University—enough to make a book.[2] Two Sundays while in Bermuda he occupied the pulpits of local churches, the subject of one of these addresses being quite characteristic: "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

Yet he did get refreshment.

"I shall come back infinitely refreshed by my outing. I am deeply conscious of the good it has done me, of the way in which it has taken the strain off and given me a quiet mind, after the somewhat too strenuous business and anxiety which followed our homecoming in October."[3]

He returned to Princeton to plunge still more seriously into the problem of the quads, now further complicated by the necessity of making decisions regarding the graduate college.

The students were discussing actively the club situation. A group met on April 15th with President Wilson and a faculty committee consisting of Dean Fine and Professors Harry A. Garfield and Paul van Dyke.[4] Wilson spoke of his quad plan and remarked that he had long had it in mind, but had considered it would take twenty-five years to

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[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, January 14, 1907.

[2]Published in 1908, as *Constitutional Government in the United States.*

[3]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, January 30, 1907.

[4]Woodrow Wilson to George C. Fraser, April 16, 1907.

work it out. Now, he said, it seemed to be immediately obtainable. Paul van Dyke, one of the founders of the Ivy Club, thought the quad plan would stir up trouble and break up the club system. Dean Fine favoured the plan, and Garfield thought the move timely, for the clubs were not as deeply rooted at Princeton as at other colleges.[1]

The trustees' committee was also at work, and the more the situation was studied the greater seemed the necessity for some remedy. David B. Jones visited the university in May, writing vigorously to Wilson regarding his impressions:

"The fact is, that for some time a considerable portion of the undergraduate body has looked upon Princeton University as simply an academic and an artistic background for the club life that is now such a prominent feature of the place. If this situation is not remedied, the clubs will exercise a dominating influence over university life. Should this come about and become publicly known, it will, of course, end all hope of any considerable financial support coming to Princeton, as no one will care to merely fill in the background for club life as it now exists. The clubs will therefore strangle the university unless some radical modification is devised and applied. . . .

"If the Board can be fully informed as to the evils of the present condition of things, they will, I think, with great unanimity insist that some remedy must be found and that without much delay, even though the remedy may seem very radical or even revolutionary."[2]

This was a strong letter, and it is the more significant since it came from a prominent, clear-headed business man, a trustee, and a leading benefactor of the institution. He was hardly a man to make loose and extravagant charges. While Jones neither praised nor condemned the

[1]President Harry A. Garfield to the author.

[2]May 15, 1907.

remedy which Wilson had proposed, it was much to have him recognize the existing evils and stand ready to correct them. It must have strengthened the president's determination and given him fresh courage to put the whole issue boldly before the trustees at their June meeting.

Other men also were frank in admitting to Wilson that the club situation had become a problem which demanded attention and remedy. This did not necessarily mean, however, that they approved of the solution which Wilson offered. Franklin Murphy, Jr., a member of "Tiger Inn," wrote Wilson on June 7th:

"I feel a good deal of concern about the future of the Clubs at Princeton. They have reached a point where they assume an importance in the life of the undergraduates which is very much exaggerated. The tendency seems to be for the worse instead of for the better and I think that something radical will have to be done ultimately. It is not yet clear to me that your solution is the proper one and yet it may be. I haven't had time to reach a conclusion as yet. . . . I should be very glad to do anything that I thought would best serve the interest of the University, even if it meant the abolition of the present Club system."

Wilson began to perceive that the problem was by no means as simple of solution as he had at first considered it: but he was ready for the battle.

II. THE BATTLE

Wilson's quad plans reached a decisive stage at the Commencement meeting of the Board of Trustees, June 10, 1907. It was altogether an unusual meeting, prompted no doubt by the weighty matters then agitating the university. Twenty-five out of the twenty-seven trustees were in attendance.

President Wilson presented the report of the com-

mittee on social reorganization. He had worked it out with studious care, on his own typewriter, and corrected it in his own hand. It had been discussed by the committeemen and had their general approval.[1]

Wilson was in excellent form. Now fifty years old, he was at the height of his powers. His prestige in the university and with his Board of Trustees was extraordinary. Scarcely any college president in the United States occupied such a place of distinction as he. He had not only made a notable record as an author, as a speaker, as an educational innovator, but he had been seriously suggested as a candidate for President of the United States. He had the vast authority of success. Up to that time he had never known failure in any major endeavour.

As he looked about him at the members of the Board, it was upon a company of men who trusted him, who were devoted to him.

The report completed and reënforced the statement he had made in the previous December.[2] "A vital, spontaneous intellectual life" was the supreme purpose of the university. Great strides had been made by the introduction of the preceptorial system—the "greatest strategic move in that direction that has been made in the whole history of American universities"—but progress was likely to be "checked or even nullified by hostile or unfavourable influences"—in short, by a university life that "severs the social from the intellectual interests of the place, and does not, with its scattered clubs and divided classes, make us up into a community even on the social side."

"It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance in the life of the undergraduate of the question whether at the end of his Sophomore year he [the student] is going to

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[1]Cleveland H. Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, September 28, 1907.

[2]The report is published in full in *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I, pp. 499–521.

be taken into one of the upper-class clubs. His thought is constantly fixed upon that object throughout the first two years of his university course with a great intensity and uneasiness whenever he thinks either of his social standing, his comradeship, or his general social considerations among his fellows. The clubs do not take in all the members of the Junior and Senior classes. About one-third are left out in the elections; and their lot is little less than deplorable. . . . It often happens that men who fail of election into one of the clubs at the end of the Sophomore year leave the University and go to some other college or abandon altogether the idea of completing their university course."

Along with the increasing concentration of the attention of the undergraduates upon the social question had gone an increasing luxury of clubhouses.

"The University, which gives life to these clubs and constitutes their ostensible *raison d'être*, seems in danger of becoming, if the present tendencies of undergraduate organization are allowed to work out their logical results, only an artistic setting and background for life on Prospect Avenue. That life, as it becomes more and more elaborate, will become more and more absorbing, and university interests will fall more and more into the background."

Wilson gave his reason for attacking the problem without delay:

"These tendencies have not been obvious until the last year or two. . . . Before the establishment of the preceptorial system . . . these things were not so near the heart of our plans and hopes for Princeton's intellectual development and academic revitalization. But now they are of the essence of everything we are striving for . . . and we are bound to consider the means by which to effect an immediate reintegration of our academic life."[2]

Well might Wilson feel that the curing of the social evils was more vital to the welfare of the institution than the success of any other project.

The essence of Wilson's remedy was "the actual absorption of the social life into the academic"; but this was not a mere imitation of the system at Oxford and Cambridge.

"This is not the scheme of the English colleges. Those colleges have separate autonomy. Each separately undertakes the instruction of the undergraduates resident within it. The plan we propose involves only a convenient residential division of the University as a social body."

He would not entirely abolish the clubs, the history of which "has been most honourable and useful," serving "in a period of transition," when no plans were thought of for the social coördination of the university," but he would make them the nuclei of the new college units, thus "affording the country at large a new example of Princeton's capacity to lead the way in matters of organization which are now puzzling the authorities of all our larger universities."

The specific recommendation of the committee, which is important, was as follows:

"Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the President of the University be authorized to take such steps as may seem wisest for maturing this general plan, and for seeking the coöperation and counsel of the upper-class clubs in its elaboration; and that this Committee be continued to consult with the President from time to time as the matter may take shape and as he may require further counsel and advice, and to mature detailed plans for the future consideration of this Board so soon as such plans can be perfected by common counsel among all concerned."

As originally written, Wilson's draft provided not only for "*maturing* this general plan," but for "maturing and

executing this general plan." Cleveland Dodge argued that the change be made so that the trustees would be given the "privilege of further consideration."[1]

So deeply interested was Wilson in these proposals that he followed up his report with an explanatory memorandum. He wanted it understood that the plan proposed was not a "hasty or recent conception" and its object was "not primarily a social reorganization of the University. It is but part,—an indispensable part,—of the purpose we have steadfastly set ourselves to accomplish, namely, the reorganization and revitalization of the University as an academic body. . . . I have long foreseen the necessity of thus drawing the undergraduates together in genuinely residential groups in direct association with members of the Faculty, as an indispensable accompaniment and completion of the preceptorial system and of all the other measures we have taken to quicken and mature the intellectual life of the University."

He put his finger upon what was to be the line of future controversy: "Debate turns, not upon the facts, but only upon the means and methods of reorganization," and then observed that "we can enter on that debate with a frankness and confidence in each other which I believe no other university in the world could hope for in an undertaking of such delicacy and magnitude."[2]

Exactly what happened in the Board meeting has been hotly disputed and variously represented. All the trustees except one voted in favour of "*something*," and the president understood them to vote exactly in the words of the resolution, that he be authorized to proceed with the maturing of his plans and to seek the coöperation of the clubs in its elaboration. With a vote of twenty-four trustees favouring his general plan, including Grover Cleve-

[1]Cleveland H. Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, September 28, 1907.

land, who had earlier expressed his doubts, and M. Taylor Pyne who was later to be a bitter opponent, to one against it,[1] he assuredly had warrant to go ahead. Several of the trustees, we know, were heart and soul with him from the beginning.

"The main object of my writing is to send you a cordial message on this subject from Mr. Jones and from me, that you may feel that we will do all we can for a united movement on this subject, which now has the backing of the Board as to the general scheme."[2]

In a letter two days later, David B. Jones said:

"The issue has been fully and clearly stated and when the report and your statement are printed, the club men can exercise their teeth upon them and will find more comfort in gnawing at a file than in attempting to bolster up the present social organization of the University. After your comments upon the report, I was most impressed by the very brief and simple statement which Mr. Pyne made. Coming from him with his long and intimate knowledge of the situation and his close personal relations to it, it was overwhelmingly impressive and pathetic to a degree. It showed great courage and strength in a great emergency and it gave me a new insight into the man's real character."

Dr. Jacobus wrote on June 18th:

"I sincerely trust that you are getting some rest after the strain of Commencement Week, and that you are gathering satisfaction from the remarkable triumph which you have won in gathering to your loyal support in your great plans for Princeton practically the entire Board of Trustees."

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[1] J. B. Shea voted against it, not because he was antagonistic to Wilson's plans, but because he desired more deliberate action.

[2] Cyrus H. McCormick to Woodrow Wilson, June 10, 1907.

And from a trustee who was later to become an opponent of Wilson:

"I learn from the *Alumni Weekly* and other sources that there is developing a serious opposition to the proposed Quad system at Princeton. I merely write to assure you that with my present light I am prepared to stand by you in your effort to improve the existing conditions. My recollection of the action of the Board is that the Board distinctly adopted the Quad system, leaving the matter of ways and means to be wrought out through discussion and effort. It was on this understanding that I voted for the plan. Of course I understood, as I presume all understood, that the plan would involve large expense and that nothing could be done until this expense was satisfactorily provided for, and that there were many details involving Faculty, students, alumni, and clubs, which would have to be wrought out in friendly, frank, and tactful discussion. So far as I am familiar with the opposition to the scheme I am confirmed by it in my original intention cordially to support you in your effort to realize your purpose."[1]

Certainly all of these men believed that the action which the Board had taken was an endorsement of the essential idea and purpose of the president's plans. Moreover, there is no evidence in the record or in the correspondence of the time that any of the trustees, except perhaps Cleveland, thought that Wilson's plan in any way interfered with the graduate college proposals, or that there was any "agreement" that the graduate college should have the right of way to the exclusion of all other projects. Indeed, at this very meeting, Cleveland not only voted with the others regarding Wilson's proposals but, as chairman of the graduate college committee, discussed architects for the proposed building, reporting, however, that there had

[1]Dr. George B. Stewart to Woodrow Wilson, October 14, 1907.

been no decision on questions of site and plans because of the "variety of contingencies and circumstances to be weighed."[1]

Wilson went forward eagerly with his plans. It was Commencement time at Princeton, and he had the opportunity of talking to student and alumni groups. The proposals were not only interesting; they were exciting. They were shocking! At all the club gatherings and banquets they were the sole subject of discussion. What did they mean? How would they affect university life?

Wilson promptly made his statement to the clubs themselves, explaining that "though certainly radical in character, [the plan] can easily be so misunderstood as to seem more radical than it is."

The tone of his brief memorandum was in no sense dictatorial—it was a presentation of evils that everyone clearly recognized and an appeal for consideration of the remedy he had suggested.

He was not attempting to abolish the clubs, but to transform them into a more closely built and useful part of the university.

"Moreover, I should hope that it would be borne in mind that this scheme of social and academic coördination, which present conditions in the University seem to render imperatively necessary, is not a plan to prevent club life in Princeton. Club life is based upon social instincts and principles which it would be impossible to eradicate. But these natural instincts and tendencies would, under the new order of things, undoubtedly express themselves in a different way, a much better way than at present. . . ."

Wilson spoke eloquently to both students and alumni. The very text of his baccalaureate address on June 9th was a trumpet call to bold action.

[1] "The Proposed Graduate College," pp. 27–28.

". . . be ye not conformed to this world. . . ."

"There are many voices of counsel," he said, "but few voices of vision. . . ." "Our true wisdom is in our ideals." And he declared at the Alumni luncheon on June 11th that Princeton was "the only university in America that has found itself in an age of doubt and of conflicting counsels."

Wilson was plainly much pleased after Commencement with the first reaction toward his plans.

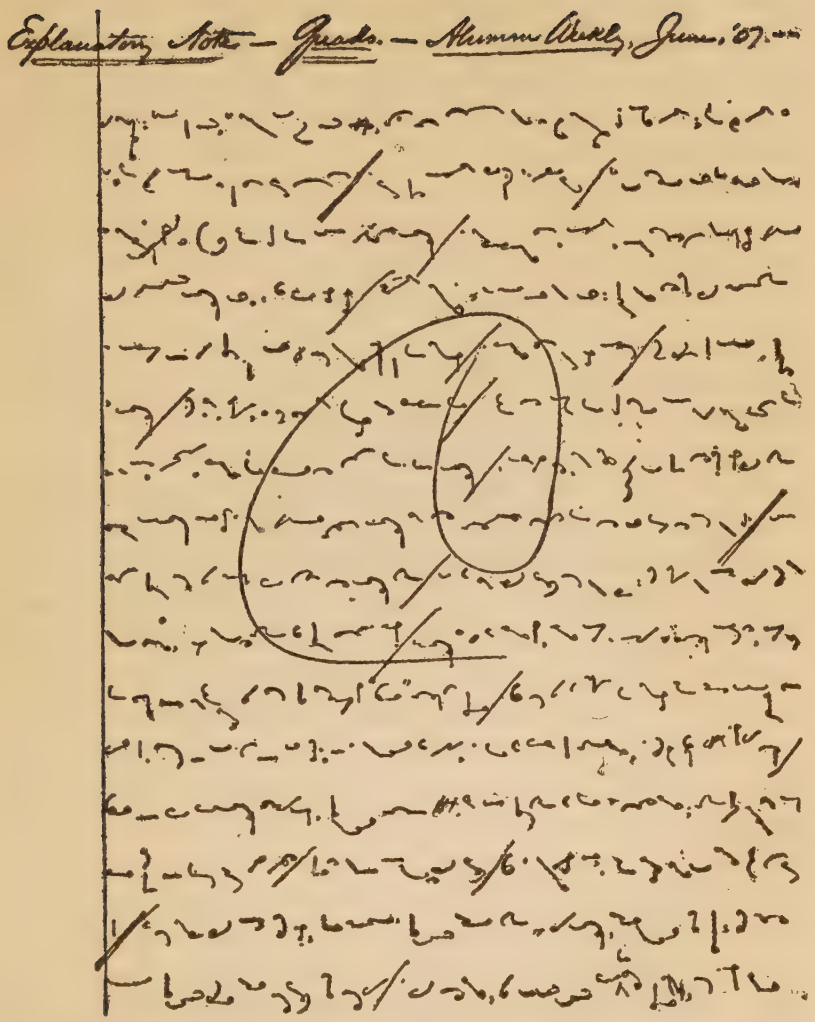
"We have a great task before us, but fortunately everybody who knows the facts is convinced of its necessity, and throughout Commencement I have had the most gratifying indications that the alumni will lend us their support in the most loyal way; that all we have to do is to be frank with them in order to carry them with us in a body."[1]

But his satisfaction was short-lived. The Princeton *Alumni Weekly* for June 12th contained the committee report to the trustees, Wilson's own address, and his statement to the clubs, and as it circulated throughout the country, as students, alumni, and faculty began to study the proposals, the storm broke.

Wilson had been under pressure during all of that spring to make addresses in various parts of the country. Popular political interest in him was steadily growing. His series of lectures at Columbia University in April had attracted wide attention. He was beginning more and more to be recognized for his "sound and clear thinking on political subjects."[2] On July 4th, he had made an important speech at the Jamestown Exposition relating to methods for dealing with great corporations. Soon afterward he retreated to the Adirondacks for the summer—where he stayed at St. Hubert's Inn, Essex County, New York—a "somewhat remote retreat . . . twenty-four miles from the railway,

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Cyrus H. McCormick, June 14, 1907.

[2]President Nicholas Murray Butler to Woodrow Wilson, April 26, 1907.



Wilson's stenographic notes. He used the Graham system. The large "C" indicates that he has transcribed this page

near Keene Valley."[1] But even in his retirement he was to hear the reverberations of the controversy over the quads. His friends came to argue with him; and he carried on a wide and animated correspondence. There was little rest for him that summer!

As early as the first of July Wilson wrote:

"The fight for the quads is on very merrily, and must now be seen through to a finish. I think that in the long run it will be taken soberly and judiciously, though now there is a great deal of wild talk, and amidst the wild talk scores of particulars come to life which show that the situation is even worse than I had supposed, and that the remedy is absolutely imperative."[2]

Wilson was not the man to hesitate, cringe, and doubt when opposition came. His convictions on large principles were formed only after he had matured them deliberately in his own mind and was convinced they were right. Once formed they were fixed. "They seemed to have for him the authority of objective unquestioned truths. It was apparently impossible for him to make allowance for the elements of doubt and uncertainty in the convictions of men in general."[3] Opposition was a challenge to battle, to be waged with all the doggedness and zest of his Covenanter forbears.

In the beginning, Wilson had believed that the initiation of the changes he had suggested would be relatively inexpensive—the "conversion of the clubs"—but as opposition developed he saw that the university would itself have to begin at once to construct some of the quadrangles, and he lost no time in seeking money for that purpose. On July 1st, we find him asking Cleveland Dodge for a letter to Mrs. Russell Sage:

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to Andrew C. Imbrie, July 10, 1907.

[2]Letter to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, July 1, 1907.

[3]Dean H. B. Fine, "An Appreciation of Woodrow Wilson."

"I want to ask her for money to carry out our new schemes. I am more deeply convinced every day that those plans must be carried out at once. In the agitation created by the new proposals, things come to the surface every day which confirm me in my belief that time is the only remedy not only, but also reveal in a new and extraordinary way the degree to which the clubs have taken precedence over the University in the thoughts and affections of our recent graduates."[1]

Authorities outside of Princeton circles, whom he respected, tended to confirm him strongly in his resolution to proceed. He felt that in solving a Princeton problem he was solving a national problem. When at Harvard in June to deliver an address, Wilson found some of the leaders deeply interested and warmly congratulatory. "If you do it, we must: and we ought all long ago to have done it." He learned that President Van Hise at the University of Wisconsin was about to put a similar plan into operation and had received a grant of $100,000 a year for the purpose.[2]

He said in a letter to Andrew C. Imbrie:

"As for myself, I feel that we are here debating, not only a plan, but an opportunity to solve a question common to all the colleges and obtain a leadership which it will not be within our choice to get again within our lifetime. The colleges of the country are looking to us for leadership in this matter, as in others, and if we disappoint them it will be an opportunity irretrievably lost. I have talked this subject over with a great many men from other universities, and I feel convinced that our solution will be accepted as the general solution, if we have strength and courage enough to act upon it."[3]

But some even of Wilson's closest friends, Cleveland

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to Cleveland H. Dodge, July 1, 1907.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]July 29, 1907.

Dodge, for example, were doubtful about pushing the plan too rapidly.

No one could have been more devoted to Wilson than Cleveland Dodge. He had been a classmate at Princeton, and loved the man and his ideals with a loyalty that was lifelong. The origins of the men were widely different. Dodge was born to wealth and position; he was conservative minded, but his passion for human welfare and human progress was not less ardent than that of Wilson. He was full of kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity.

Wilson regarded Dodge's unflagging support as one of his greatest treasures of friendship.

"I do not know anything that cheers me more than a letter from you. It brings with it such a delightful breath of affection and unselfish loyalty and makes my heart warm. God bless you for it and for all your generous thoughts about me."[1]

While Dodge was warmly sympathetic with Wilson's quad proposals, he was a calmer and more cautious man.

". . . I feel very strongly, as you do, about the necessity of carrying through your plans; but I think we both agree that, if we can do it by evolutionary methods rather than by revolutionary methods, it will be better."[2]

Wilson responded immediately:

"You may be sure that I believe in evolutionary processes, but money will lubricate the evolution as nothing else will. Indeed, as I look forward to the execution of the scheme, there is nothing but the financial side of it that gives me uneasiness. Everything else, I am sure, will work out as we desire it to work out, after the excitement has passed off and everybody has had his say."[3]

He was confident that "something might come out of

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to Cleveland H. Dodge, January 27, 1911.

[2]Cleveland H. Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, July 2, 1907.

[3]July 3, 1907.

an interview" with Mrs. Sage. ". . . I shall hold myself in readiness to come out of my mountain retreat at any moment for the purpose of seeing her. . . ."[1]

Other members of the Board of Trustees believed that the evils Wilson set forth were real and that the fight upon them must be unremitting. One of these was Dr. Melancthon W. Jacobus, dean of the Hartford Theological Seminary. He had been a student with Wilson at Princeton, though not of the same class. He had the same strong religious convictions, the same virile social ideals. A man of large mould, both physically and intellectually, clear of thought and firm of courage, he was a tower of strength and comfort to Wilson throughout all the years of his struggle. Another was David B. Jones of Chicago, the type *par excellence* of the "business man of vision" so rare outside of America. Born in Wales in 1848, his family migrated to Iowa when he was a child. He and his brother Thomas D. Jones graduated at Princeton in the class of 1876, sharing the first honours. Wilson was a sophomore in that year but their acquaintance did not begin until later. Jones studied in Germany, became a lawyer, and afterward one of the leading business men of Chicago. He was a true "man of devotion," modest, frank, loyal, generous. And he was a fighter! Wilson leaned upon him heavily from the beginning.

"I take my chief hope of what is to come from the support and friendship of men like yourself, who know me and whom I trust down to the ground; and I feel sure that I shall take the better part of my success from your counsel. I feel particularly near to you, if you will let me say so, because I have learned your courage and your zest in unselfish action."[2]

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[1]July 3, 1907. A few days after writing this, Mr. Wilson and his family went to St. Hubert's, Essex County, New York.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to David B. Jones, August 11, 1902.

Both David B. Jones and his brother Thomas D. Jones, who became a trustee of Princeton in 1908, were firm supporters of Wilson. Cyrus H. McCormick, and Edward W. Sheldon, his classmates, could be steadily counted upon; and in all the earlier years M. Taylor Pyne, also a graduate of Princeton, and one of the generous supporters of the university, was Wilson's devoted friend. As a matter of fact, Wilson's support throughout by those trustees who understood best what he was trying earnestly to do was not short of remarkable. No man was ever richer in his friendships than Woodrow Wilson.

But the way of the man of vision is hard, whether he be a crusader with a new plan, an inventor with a new telescope, a poet with a new message.

His previous successes at Princeton had given him great authority, but here was a proposal which struck at the very core of human relationships. Almost no one defended the clubs as they were then constituted, or excused the evils that Wilson had pointed out. They turned upon his remedy: if friends, with counsels of delay or with searching inquiry to test out his thinking; if enemies, with opposition that did not meet the real issue. Every reform, from the beginning of time, has gone through the same process. No one defends evil, but how men hate change. War is hell; but woe to the man who has a plan to abolish it.

Wilson was more than eager to explain. His letters bear evidence not only of his willingness to discuss every issue, but of his clear understanding of what he was proposing. He welcomed a letter from Andrew C. Imbrie, a new trustee and a leader among the younger alumni, in which Imbrie appealed for his help in throwing light on the whole situation.

"If you are willing to send me a list of questions, I will take the greatest pleasure in replying to them as fully

and carefully as possible; or . . . I will come out of the woods and join the little circle of men you speak of as soon as a date can be set."[1]

Wilson expressed his own conception of the situation a few days later:

"It was clearly understood at the meeting of the Board that we were adopting the *principle* or *idea* of the quad. plan as the policy of the University; but, at the same time, it was desired to have the freest possible criticism and discussion on the part of everybody concerned. I am sure that the Board would be perfectly willing to consider any other scheme having the same end in view. They did not mean in any respect to shut their minds, but only to express their purpose. . . ."[2]

Imbrie conferred with friends of the university and sent Wilson a long list of questions on July 25th. They were intelligent and penetrating, going quite thoroughly to the heart of the matter. Wilson's reply was complete, definite, detailed.[3] It left no doubt as to the thoroughness of his thinking upon the subject, but that very fact only served to make the proposal still more distasteful to those who were opposed to any change.

Wilson wrote many other letters that summer, vigorously meeting misunderstandings and misrepresentations. He resisted especially the charge that he had accused the clubs of dissolute conduct, that he was unwilling to discuss other plans, that he was set upon driving his proposal through without adequate discussion.

"I can assure you that no haste will be made in carrying out these plans and that an abundance of time will be allowed for a very full and thorough understanding and

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[1]Woodrow Wilson to Andrew C. Imbrie, July 10, 1907.

[2]*Ibid.*, July 15, 1907.

[3]For Imbrie's letter and Wilson's reply, see Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, Volume VIII, No. 1, pp. 7–9.

discussion of the whole matter before any step is taken. That has been our purpose from the first, and I have been expecting to devote this next winter to discussing the matter with anyone who cares to discuss it with me."[1]

But the tide was strong against him. He did not receive the support he expected from the alumni. It seemed that they did not really *want* to understand him. He could reply with a touch of plaintiveness to one cheering letter from the West:

"Unhappily there has not been a 'flood of commendatory letters' pouring in upon me with regard to our new plans at Princeton, but I cannot help feeling confident that in the long run the tide will turn in that direction. It of course hits very hard to deprive the men most favoured of their present club life at college, and I do not wonder that their affection for the clubs at first governs their judgment.

"It is very delightful to receive such letters as this of yours, and I thank you for it most cordially."[2]

The fact was that the Princeton following, intensely as it admired Wilson, much as it appreciated what he had already done, clearly as it perceived the evils he was seeking to cure, was a little out of breath. Wilson was assuming a discipline of mind, a devotion to purpose, equal to his own. He had already asked much of his more or less easy-going little world. He had pegged up the requirements of scholarship; he was demanding an unprecedented amount of work of students, and indeed of faculty and trustees. Princeton was losing its reputation as a pleasant place of social retirement with an intellectual background. Students from rich or influential families—alumni families!—forced to meet the sharp new discipline of scholarship, sometimes fell by the wayside. The college had actually lost slightly in attendance. While this did not

[1] Woodrow Wilson to H. Howard Armstrong, September 3, 1907.

[2] Letter to J. M. Bennett, Jr., July 17, 1907.

in the least worry Wilson, for he was after quality and not quantity, it furnished an easy handle for his critics.

Now he was asking new sacrifices, demanding changes in the customs and traditions of "that arch conservative, the under-graduate himself." As he said ironically in an address delivered the following March:

"Looking back upon those years it seems to me a very interesting circumstance, gentlemen, that when we revolutionized the course of study at Princeton and absolutely changed the method of instruction, [it] raised hardly a ripple upon the surface of the alumni.

"They were interested when they heard that things had been done that were considered noteworthy; they were gratified; but in accepting what had been done evidently thought of it as a purely intellectual matter and entirely our business. [Laughter.] But when we came to touching the social life of the University, that was another matter; not a ripple of excitement [Laughter], not a mere ripple of excitement, but a storm of excitement swept the body academic, and we knew that we had at last touched the vital matter."[1]

If some of Wilson's best friends who believed utterly that he was right were hesitant about pressing the matter too hard—"We dearly love Woodrow, but he does drive too fast"[2]—his opponents were attacking his plans without gloves. Two general lines of opposition, as ancient as the struggle of the innovator to correct the evils of society, at once developed:

First, the proposed remedy in itself was all wrong.

Second, the methods of the reformer were all wrong.

One of the earliest and strongest attacks was from those who believed that the private property rights and

[1]Address before the University Club of Chicago, March 12, 1908.

[2]Dean Henry B. Fine to Professor Stockton Axson.

privileges of the clubs were sacred—superior even to what Wilson called the "primary purpose of the university."

An indignant letter signed "Ivy" thus expresses it:

"Is it possible that the doctrines of the confiscation of property and the superior wisdom of those in high places which have recently been so characteristic of our political life are to be received with favour in one of the most historic and conservative of our institutions of learning?"[1]

Another potent group of opponents argued that Wilson's plan would destroy ancient and accepted traditions—the ceremonies and club associations that alumni remembered warmly. How could an alumnus, accustomed to returning at Commencement to the easy conviviality of "Ivy" or "Tiger Inn," in which he felt a proprietary interest, think of returning to a mere quadrangle? And finally there was the genuine feeling that "class spirit" would be destroyed. When Franklin Murphy, Jr., reported to the president on the sentiments of the men at the "Tiger Inn" annual banquet, he said the feeling was strong against the quad idea "because it seemed to mark the end of class cohesion. . . . If there is one thing that makes Princeton strong with her alumni it is the class spirit. . . . Any action that puts the class spirit in peril is alarming to graduates."[2]

It was in vain that Wilson replied:

"As a matter of fact, nothing is more damaging to the homogeneity and spirit of the classes than what is going on here, and it is one of our deepest convictions that the

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[1]The New York *Sun*, letter dated June 25, 1907. Apropos of the transfer of club properties to a university, it is of interest to note that about January 1, 1927, eleven fraternities at the University of Pennsylvania conveyed their chapter houses to the university to be incorporated as part of the dormitory system. Had the Princeton clubs been willing to anticipate a similar course, the university would have been materially aided in its dormitory problem as well as in the reintegration of intellectual life. Under the system prevailing, men took only their meals at the Princeton clubs; they lived in the college dormitories or elsewhere.

[2]June 18, 1907.

measures we are seeking to take will do more than anything else could do to prevent the loss of class spirit, which we all value so highly. Under present conditions the feeling of the freshmen and sophomores for the University is being rapidly replaced by a clique feeling and by impulses of social ambition, which are wholly incompatible with the old order of things as you knew them while you were in college. I quite agree with you that class spirit must be maintained as one of the foundations of our self-government and of a great many things which we value profoundly, but I can assure you that it cannot be maintained under the present social organization of the University. Of that we have had abundant and convincing proofs during the last year and a half or two years."[1]

But probably the deepest opposition of all came from those who resented what they considered an attempt to dictate how students "should arrange their social life." As crudely put, "no one can make a gentleman associate with a mucker." Again Wilson argued patiently but unavailingly:

"The primary object that the Board has in view is not social, indeed that is not its chief object. The object is academic and intellectual. We are seeking the organization best suited to the intellectual development of the University, its development as a place of serious study. I should be distressed to have the plan regarded as in any sense an attack on the clubs. It would have been proposed, even if there had been no clubs, as a desirable method of drawing the undergraduates together in an academic organization. . . ."[2]

In short, in his single-minded devotion to what he considered the prime purpose of a university—the "things of the mind," the "discipline of the spirit"—Wilson found

[1]June 20, 1907.

[2]Letter to Arthur H. Osborn, July 17, 1907.

himself facing every ancient bogie of progress: vested property rights, ceremonial traditions, social privilege. He was learning fast in this little world of the university!—lessons he needed in preparation for what was coming in state and nation.

While these elements lay solidly behind the opposition, the safest strategy of attack, as always, was indirect—upon the method of the reformer. He was "too drastic," "too dictatorial," he "was not conciliatory enough," he "recommended common counsel but did not practise it," he did not enough consult the faculty, the trustees, the alumni, the students. He should have "delayed," taken it more coolly. In short, he should have cured deep-seated evils without hurting anyone's feelings, endangering any property rights, interfering with any social privileges.

No doubt mistakes were made. Wilson was human. He was too impatient with dullness; he was so swift and clear in his own mental processes that he did not explain enough; and half-measures—"feeble passes"—irritated him sharply.

"The intensity of his conviction of a certain duty as God gave him to see it, sometimes prevented him from envisaging other things. If this be a fault, it is one which has been shared by many noble characters."[1]

Nevertheless personal attack, criticism of method, have been the immemorial method of meeting a reform that men were either not ready to accept or were determined not to accept. Destroy the prophet! Wear him down with criticism of his personality, his method of action, his human relationships. If the spirit of Princeton had been with Wilson at the time he would have achieved his desire as easily as he had achieved the scarcely less revolutionary preceptorial system.

[1]Letter from Dr. Henry van Dyke to President E. A. Alderman, October 7, 1924.

While the first strong reaction to the quad proposals was naturally from those most nearly affected—the students and the alumni—the same sharp discussion was also going on in the faculty, the members of which knew the actual conditions better than any outsider. Here the lines drawn were clear and definite—and it is significant that an overwhelming majority stood with Wilson. One of his supporters wrote:

"Nothing could be more frank, more truthful, or better suited to its purpose than your statement in the *Alumni Weekly* on the Social Coördination of the university. . . . Your proposal is eminently conservative and considerate of existing prejudices, and I trust the alumni will, in due course of time, understand it. When they understand it they will support your efforts. . . . When I recollect the absorbing and unnatural fascination the Clubs have exerted in the case of several students with whom I was intimate, the morbid jealousy, the perverted sense of loyalty and honour, the sensitiveness to criticism, I am less amazed at the attitude of the young alumni, but am all the more convinced that your proposal should be carried out at any cost. If you succeed in this, you will have done something for higher education in America of even greater importance than introducing the preceptorial system, and of more good consequence to Princeton than even the new course of study."[1]

With the opening of the fall term in 1907, the faculty found itself divided into two strongly antagonistic factions. Each began to hold meetings, discuss plans of action. The group which supported Wilson was led by Professors Daniels, Ormond, Vreeland, Garfield, Elliott, and Axson. Dean Fine was the backbone of the movement. That opposed to Wilson was led by Dr. Henry van Dyke, Dean

[1]Professor George M. Harper to Woodrow Wilson, July 18, 1907.

West, and presently was to be joined by Wilson's most intimate friend, Professor Hibben.

Van Dyke was prompt and outright in his opposition.

"I feel bound to tell you, personally, of my profound regret at hearing that the essential idea of the plan of residential quads for Princeton must be understood as already adopted. It is the 'essential idea' that makes the radical change,—a change which seems to me full of the gravest perils to the life and unity of Princeton."[1]

A few days later, van Dyke wrote an article condemning the scheme.[2] His opposition was based not upon expediency, but upon contrary judgment as to the results that would accrue and the absence of need for such a reorganization.

West might be expected to be of the opposition, for he thought the quad plan, if carried through, would interfere with the plans for the graduate college. But West did not take the outright stand of van Dyke. He charged high-handed action:

"The sweeping and unexpected action of the Board of Trustees regarding the residential reorganization of our students—an action taken at your instance and without allowing any opportunity beforehand for hearing the opinion of the Faculty or of other persons properly interested and deeply concerned—has so disheartened me that I have [been] unable to think of anything else or to shake off the feeling of dismay at the troubles ahead of us. . . .

"You have been President for five eventful and useful years, and every measure of your administration has had my unwavering adhesion and best efforts—even to the point of sending me to the hospital. I have served Prince-

[1]Dr. Henry van Dyke to Woodrow Wilson, July 5, 1907.

[2]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, September 25, 1907, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 4–7. The article is an excellent example of intelligent opposition.

ton and your administration for something more than salary and office. If the spirit of Princeton is to be killed, I have little interest in the details of the funeral."[1]

While no man consulted the faculty less in advance regarding his plans than Dean West, and while his proposal for a graduate college was exactly Wilson's quad idea applied to graduate students, his letter represented the strong feeling engendered. Wilson replied immediately:

"I have just received your letter of the 10th, and have read it with deep distress. I am sorry, very sorry, that you did not say these things to me before I left Princeton. It is only in conversation that misconceptions so deep as yours can be removed.

"I can assure you that you are entirely mistaken in saying, or in supposing, 'unconstrained discussion of the essentials of the plan by the Faculty is now made utterly impossible,' and that if you had waited, with some confidence in my character, until the autumn, you would have seen how wholly gratuitous and unfounded such a statement is. Certainly there is no plan, or purpose, or possibility of 'killing the spirit of Princeton.' I really cannot imagine what you mean. You must be speaking out of some extraordinary misconception of the whole idea and purpose.

"The plan involves so many elements which lie within the province and authority of the Board alone, that it seemed to me imperative that it should first receive the sanction of the trustees. No one who candidly considers its scope and character can fail to see that. But the Board intended, as I of course did, that the freest possible discussion should follow; and it is to follow, in order that every element of common counsel may contribute to the final decision."[2]

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[1]Dean West to Woodrow Wilson, July 10, 1907.

[2]Letter to Andrew F. West, July 11, 1907, transcription of stenographic copy.

And the discussion in the faculty did follow, with a vengeance!

No opposition touched Wilson more vitally than that of Professor Hibben. To Wilson's intense, idealistic, sensitive nature such a friendship had something sacred about it. The two men had been for years almost inseparable. Wilson's many letters to Professor and Mrs. Hibben give evidence of the depth of his feeling, his dependence upon them:

"Thank you with all my heart for your letter. It would be hard for me to tell you,—I fear I never can by word of mouth,—how your thoughtfulness and love touch and delight me. Your letter contained just the things I wanted to hear,—just the items of news, and, above all, just the assurances of being thought of and missed and loved. It gave me the feeling, just the feeling that makes me happiest, that I was *needed*,—needed for pleasure as well as for business."[1]

Whenever a new committee was appointed, Hibben was sure to be on it: Wilson had asked him to serve in his place as president of the university while he was ill the year before.

"Mr. Hibben was of the deliberate type, dependable. The Wilson family turned to him instinctively when there was need of a friend, in sickness or sudden death. He never failed them in an emergency. But between the two men there was this great difference: Mr. Wilson would act suddenly and then hold on like a bulldog, without compromise; Mr. Hibben would arrive at conclusions more slowly and it was his habit to listen to others, to compromise for half a loaf where the whole loaf could not be had."[2]

Wilson, with his passionate devotion to principle, felt that Hibben, who knew the evils he was attacking as well

[1]Letter to Professor John Grier Hibben, January 26, 1907.

[2]Professor Stockton Axson in a memorandum prepared for the author.

as anyone, was arguing expediency: Hibben, who was naturally more accessible to the expression of alumni and other opinion than Wilson, considered that he was only offering the "poor but well intended offices of friendship" in warning Wilson of the dangers that confronted him.

"You know that I would never have sought to 'rob you of hope,' as Mrs. Wilson characterized it, unless I had thought that I might at the same time forearm you by forewarning you of the gathering opposition. Were it not for my own convictions as to the dangers which attend this plan as regards the vital interests of Princeton, I would have gladly stood with you shoulder to shoulder against the world. Feeling as I do on that score, the only possibility remaining as a friend was to show you as far as I saw it myself the existing conditions as regards the attitude of the Trustees, Faculty and Alumni to your plan and the manner of its presentation to the Princeton community."[1]

Both van Dyke and Hibben visited Wilson at his summer home in the Adirondacks, and there were long arguments. He could not at all convince van Dyke, but since van Dyke's opposition, even though he considered it petulant, was based upon wholly different convictions and principles, Wilson had no quarrel with him.

". . . I ventured to oppose President Wilson, without any personal animosity whatever, and our side won out. He and I never broke friendly relations during the conflict, and when it was ended neither of us needed to apologize, and I was able with sincere joy to give him my humble support in his political career, first as Governor of New Jersey, and second as President of the United States and the greatest friend of world peace that our age has seen."[2]

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[1]Professor John Grier Hibben to Woodrow Wilson, July 8, 1907.

[2]Letter from Dr. Henry van Dyke to F. W. Ruckstull, January 17, 1921.

When President of the United States, Wilson appointed van Dyke Minister to Holland.

To argue with Wilson that his diagnosis was incorrect, or that his remedy was inapplicable, was tolerable to him —he did not always take such opposition quite seriously! —but to warn him that all the powers of the earth were opposing him, and that he should therefore pull down his flag, was to stiffen every fibre of his hard-knit Scotch spirit. If he was right, or felt that he was, what did opposition matter!

Wilson's zeal and unfaltering devotion to the cause he took up at this time were characteristic of his whole life. He never attacked big issues half-heartedly nor surrendered easily. Like the famous Blair family of Lincoln's day, when he went in for a fight, he went in for a funeral. Opposition only served to make him force the fighting. The more his opponents disclosed their real objections to his proposals, the more conclusively they proved—it seemed to him—how deep-seated the evils really were. Opposition did not deter him: it convinced him.

Wilson secured little rest in the summer of 1907, even in his distant retreat. It worried him to have his close friends—Dodge, Jones, and others—"pestered to death" with a battle he considered his own. When he learned that Dodge was being annoyed over the quads, he wrote:

"Cannot you turn the letters over to me? I am not getting much vacation anyhow. . . ."[1]

He goes on to say:

"The task is every way legitimately mine. I feel that I am in reality engaged in nothing less than the most critical work of my whole administration, the work upon which its whole vitality and success depends. . . . I do not believe, my dear fellow, that you can know the affection and gratitude I feel for you."

[1]Letter to Cleveland H. Dodge, August 4, 1907.

His summer, indeed, was overburdened with work. He was desperately trying to revise his Columbia lectures for a book. He was having more and more to consider talk of his political availability. He was spending much time writing out a "Credo" of his political beliefs, and preparing an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* which he called "Political Contrasts,"[1] tracing the political history of America since 1857, and seeking the application of its lessons to the problems of the times. Well might he write to his friend Harry A. Garfield, who had just been elected president of Williams College:

St. Hubert's, Essex Co., N. Y.,
16 July, 1907.

MY DEAR GARFIELD,

I congratulate Williams with all my heart, and I know that Princeton's loss is irreparable. I do not know whether to congratulate *you* or not. It is very delightful to serve one's alma mater with all one's powers, but I believe there is no one in the country who can realize more vividly or more fully what you are sacrificing and what exceeding burdens you are assuming than I can. I often long for my old quiet life as student and professor with an intensity that makes me very unhappy. But I am sure that you are answering a call of duty as I did; and I hope that, with your disposition, you will not suffer as much as I have suffered under the burden of painful tasks and misunderstandings,—struggles with one's friends, and a sort of isolation of responsibility the extent of which I had not at all anticipated. I pray with deep affection that you may be blessed in every part of your work, and that some good fortune may often give us touch of one another's mind and heart. We must make diligent use of the year of comradeship that remains to us.

Your affectionate friend,
WOODROW WILSON

Wilson returned to Princeton in September as to a battle ground. His friends were meeting at Professor Ormond's house, or Dean Fine's study; his opponents with West.

[1]Published in November, 1907, with the title, "Politics, 1857–1907."

On September 26th came the first great faculty meeting. It was held in Nassau Hall, in the faculty room arranged so much like the British House of Commons, with portraits of former presidents of Princeton upon the wall. Wilson presided—a kind of prime minister submitting his fate to a division of the House! His own "party" proposed the resolution, Daniels presented it, Hunt seconded:

"Be it resolved that in the principle of the plan recently sanctioned by the Board of Trustees for the social coördination of the University, the Faculty do concur, and that a Committee of 7 be appointed to coöperate with the President, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Committee of the Board already constituted to elaborate the plan in question."[1]

The faculty fight was on. Dr. van Dyke countered with a speech and offered a substitute motion to this effect:

"That the Board of Trustees be asked that a Committee be appointed from their body and the Faculty who with the President shall investigate the present social condition of the University in conjunction with representatives of the Alumni and students, and consider the best method of curing evils which exist and of maintaining and promoting the unity, democracy, and scholarly life of the undergraduates."[2]

Here the issue was clearly joined. It was a moment of breathless intensity. No one knew quite where the faculty really stood. Professor Hibben slowly rose—"you could hear a pin drop!"—and seconded van Dyke's motion. President Wilson turned pale.

"Do I understand that Professor Hibben seconds the motion?" the president asked in steady tones, but as one who could scarcely believe what he heard and saw.

[1] Minutes of the Faculty.

[2] *Ibid.*

"I do, Mr. President," was the grave reply.

No vote, however, was taken at that time; but four days later the second momentous faculty meeting took place. What position would the new preceptors take, who now made up such a proportion of the faculty? What would the "old faculty" do? The result of the vote was decisive. Eighty were against the van Dyke resolution, twenty-three for it.[1] In short, an overwhelming victory for the Wilson group. It was charged afterward that the preceptors carried the day. As a matter of fact, a majority of both preceptors and "old faculty" sided with Wilson. Thirty-one of the "old faculty" against twenty-two were with him.[2]

The third great faculty meeting came on October 7th; and it was here that Wilson made a speech which some of those who heard it consider one of the remarkable addresses of his life. He had prepared for it with great care. He endeavoured to present not only the necessity but the reasonableness of his proposals, not "as imagined and misrepresented," but "as in fact conceived and intended." He emphasized again the central idea of his entire educational philosophy:

"Any organization that has the idea of exclusiveness at its foundation is antagonistic to the best training for citizenship in a democratic country. If such organizations exist they must at least be subordinate and not of the very structure of the place."[3]

While a vote on Daniels's original motion was in order at this meeting, none was taken: it was felt that the real attitude of the faculty was now sufficiently known and the next move must come from the Board of Trustees.

During the entire summer, the Board, and especially

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[1]Minutes of the Faculty.

[2]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, February 2, 1910.

[3]Woodrow Wilson's notes.

the quad committee, had been the centre of hot controversy. Alumni organizations and other opponents of Wilson's plan felt that their only avenue of appeal was to the governing body. The same lines of cleavage began to develop there as in the faculty. The members were alarmed at the extent of the storm. Some were for fighting the battle straight through—men like David B. Jones and Dr. Jacobus. Others began to doubt, waver, or become active opponents. One of the most powerful of the latter was M. Taylor Pyne, who had at first supported Wilson enthusiastically and had voted affirmatively in the June meeting. In a letter to Bayard Henry, a member of the quad committee, he wrote:

"I am by no means certain myself that the 'quad' system is the best, especially for the clubs, but I do feel that this agitation will do more than could be done in any other way to remedy the great evil caused by undergraduate selection to the clubs."[1]

Henry was not unalterably opposed to the quad scheme, but he thought, if it was to be put into effect at all, it must be done slowly. To his mind, the immediate task was to check the worst of the prevailing evils so that the clubs would operate in a less offensive manner.[2]

Henry's letter, as well as many other similar communications, shows that the writer did not understand Wilson's underlying purpose—which was to make the intellectual life of the university supreme—or if he did, thought something else more important, "Princeton spirit," or "class spirit," or "free social life." But if the institution failed of its highest aim and duty, of what avail was class or university spirit? The question was not a mere correction of certain club evils and the providing of nourishing food for students. If it had been, there

[1]July 17, 1907.

[2]Bayard Henry to Woodrow Wilson, August 16, 1907.

would, of course, have been no need for quads. It was fundamentally an educational question.

But if some of the trustees were weakening, others were growing stauncher than ever:

"I have had some very gloomy letters during the Summer, one or two bordering on purple even. What has amazed me most in this matter is to find club members displaying the spirit of labour unions. Blind and deaf to every consideration, except to the continued domination of the clubs. Personal friendship, Princeton's glittering opportunity for almost dramatic leadership in a great work, the blighting of the intellectual interests of many of her best minds and finest spirits count for nothing—loyalty to the clubs, everything. . . .

"My conviction has been confirmed by everything that I have heard and inquired into during the Summer, that the Clubs, as now organized, must go, or Princeton cease to be an important element in University leadership in this country."[1]

Dr. Jacobus was not less a convinced supporter:

". . . I wish to stand with you on unquestioned record before the Board."[2]

The struggle was beginning now to attract much attention in the outside world. Newspapers and magazines showed deep interest and, in general, sympathy for Wilson's bold attempt to cure old and well-recognized evils. The *Review of Reviews* contained an article commending the quad system. It said in part:

"No more fundamental and courageous move in the direction of vitality and wholesomeness in academic life has been made in recent years. . . ."[3]

Charles Francis Adams wrote to Woodrow Wilson on October 2d:

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[1]David B. Jones to Woodrow Wilson, September 6, 1907.

[2]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, October 16, 1907.

"Your theory of 'quads' seems to me more nearly to meet existing college requirements than anything else which has been advanced."

The struggle was to come to a head in the October meeting of the Board.

III. DEFEAT

The regular fall meeting of the Board of Trustees took place October 17, 1907. Everyone knew it was to be a momentous occasion, the first opportunity to discuss Wilson's proposals since they were approved in June. There had been a number of conferences beforehand and a lively private canvass of the situation. A strong feeling existed that the passions engendered were splitting the Board, endangering the university. Many of the trustees were Eastern men, residents of the large cities where they came into contact with the blustering club element of the alumni. Moreover, they were generally alarmed over the financial problems which confronted the university. Much money was required to support the new preceptorial system—much more for new buildings—and West and Cleveland were demanding, strenuously, the support of their plans for a graduate college. It was also the year of the 1907 panic—almost indeed at the height of it[1]—and some of these men were closely associated with the great financial interests. It was a time of alarm and anxiety—for caution, not expansion.

Great pressure was therefore brought upon Wilson, even to the point of veiled threats by certain powerful contributors to the university that, if he forced his proposals at that time, their financial assistance in necessary university expenditures would cease. Suggestions were also made that he compromise and build a "sample quadrangle" on the campus to test out his plan—one

[1]The Knickerbocker Trust Company failed on October 22d.

of the trustees even offered to furnish the money for it—but he considered that this course would avail nothing since such a quadrangle would be filled by men not in the clubs at all, and the real problem would not be met. He thought such a proposal merely a device for dodging the issue, a method he hated.

When the trustees met, therefore, Wilson announced that the committee on social coördination had no report to make. His warmest friends considered this the wisest course, and he took their advice. Pyne promptly offered the following resolutions:

"1. That the action taken by the Board in June be reconsidered.

"2. That the Board do not now deem it wise to adopt the recommendations made by the Committee and that the President be requested to withdraw the plan.

"3. That the Committee be discharged."[1]

The vote was immediately taken: with every member voting for the resolutions except one—Dr. John DeWitt. In June, every member except one had approved the plan.

It was a fearful blow to Wilson—the hardest he had ever had to meet up to that time. It had divided the institution, it had broken friendships. To save Wilson some of his embarrassment, however, and to ease the situation before the public, it was voted, Dodge moving and Pyne seconding, that the following statement be issued:

"The Board, having reconsidered its action last June, has asked the President to withdraw his plan, and he has withdrawn it. The Board fully recognizes that the President's convictions have not changed, and have no wish to hinder him in any way in his purpose to endeavour to convince the members of the Board and Princeton men that this plan is the true solution."[2]

[1] Minutes of the Board of Trustees.

[2] *Ibid.*

Such a promise to let him talk gave Wilson no comfort. He felt that the action of the trustees amounted to deliberate defence of a way of life in Princeton University which defeated its primary purpose. Vested property rights, social privileges, empty ceremonies, were more powerful than the intellectual vitality of the place. Wilson perceived more vividly than ever before that the same forces were dominant within the university that he felt to be politically dangerous outside.

He never for a moment considered giving up the fight, but he did think of resigning from the university. He drafted a letter in shorthand, setting forth his position, but did not finally complete or dispatch it. He talked with Axson about returning to the practice of the law in Virginia, where he could carry on his fight outside of the university. But upon second thought he considered that his duty to the university was superior to his own personal disappointment. On October 23d, he wrote Dr. Jacobus, who had not been able to attend the Board meeting:

". . . I have got nothing out of the transaction except complete defeat and mortification. I refrained from resigning because I saw at last that I did not have the right to place the University in danger of going to pieces; and because I felt that the men who were forcing this surrender upon me had made all that I have accomplished financially possible; but I thought that they meant what they said when they offered to leave me free, and am at a loss to understand what my duty is now that I find that most of them did not. I trust that a kind Providence will presently send me some sign of guidance which I shall have sight enough to perceive and to interpret.

"One thing I have got out of the whole affair which is deeply precious to me, and which will comfort me and make me deeply thankful for the rest of my life, and that

is the splendid proofs of your affection and confidence which every turn of the business has brought me. That is a solid profit to have reaped out of deep sorrow; and I want you to know with what warmth and loyalty I have given my ardent friendship and allegiance in return."

From Dr. Jacobus, as well as from other warm friends, came the reassurance and sympathy that Wilson needed. It was a new call to arms, to fight the good fight; and it was from now on, and strongly, the fight for democracy. It was a turning point in Wilson's career. He saw clearly that the struggle was wider than the world of the university, that it went to the roots of the national life. He began now to consider more seriously the political advances that were being made to him; he began to see that he might have to carry his fight over into the national arena.

But Dr. Jacobus and David B. Jones were urging him to press the fighting within the university constituency. They were not the men to cringe or weaken.

"I have no hesitation as to what is your duty in the situation. This is too serious a matter not to be taken seriously by the Board as well as by yourself, for it is being taken most seriously by the great public who are interested in the matter far more deeply than the smart set of the Clubs or the scared set of the Board at present realize. . . .

"I would not resign now. I would fight it out. I would take my time, but I would make the scheme and the principle which it embodies so plain to every Alumni Association that the self-respecting spirit of American democracy would rise to the acceptance of them with the instinct of the preservation of our national institutions. . . . you must believe us when we say that there is absolutely no one who can lead Princeton to this expression of her best ideals but yourself. Be assured that the plain people of the great body of the alumni and of the educational world

outside are with you as surely as the plain people of the nation were with Abraham Lincoln forty-five years ago, or with Theodore Roosevelt to-day; and in the end you have got to win out."[1]

Wilson's hesitation was indeed only momentary; a week after his defeat we find him echoing his own indomitable resolution in a speech before the Philadelphian Society—the student religious organization—to the text:

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

His topic was "singleness of purpose," his admonition "principle held with steadfastness."

Well, he would go forward! Let the opposition do what it would, the fight must go on. It was right! On November 6th, he wrote to Dr. Jacobus:

"I have never for a moment thought of giving the fight up. On the contrary, every indication has convinced me that it is more necessary even than I had thought. Nothing else than such reforms as we have in mind will make Princeton free of the influences which are now allowed to govern her; and if we can bring our Princeton constituency to see the necessity of the reform, it is clearly our duty to do so, no matter how long it takes or how hard the task may prove."

And then in a sentence he reveals a new conception of the real measure of the struggle:

"We shall really not be free to do what we deem best at Princeton until we are relieved from the dictation of the men who subscribe to the Committee of Fifty Fund and who can withhold our living from us if we displease them."

Wilson's plan of campaign became at once clear. He was always thinking in terms of "responsible leadership,"[2] always of an "appeal to the country."[3] This was to be

[1] Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, October 25, 1907.

an "appeal to the country"—the constituents, that is, of Princeton. It was the pressure of that constituency that had frightened and routed the trustees. He would go to them, reason with them—convince them. In the meantime, he would not carry the fight further in the Board or in the faculty—for it would accomplish nothing whatever. In these quarters there must be a "healing silence"—until he could come back with the alumni behind him.

In the course of the struggle he had begun to receive much encouragement from alumni who knew the situation well. Certain of the rich Eastern groups would oppose him, but the mass, and the Westerners, would support him.

"There is no doubt about where the great mass of our Alumni stand on this question, and the obstruction narrows itself down to the club men who so largely contribute toward the support of the University. In time even these men will see that the only way in which Princeton can preserve its self-respect is to free itself from dictation from outside, no matter at what cost. It is much better that Princeton should limit its work, even get rid of most of its preceptors and some of its faculty, falling back to what the permanent endowment can take care of and from that to build up again, than that it should become a thing of contempt and a sham institution of learning. . . .

"If Mr. Pyne thinks it best to withdraw his support, I shall be very sorry, but I shall be infinitely more sorry to see the University dominated by the club men of New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh."[1]

Here we see Wilson driven more and more to the democratic issue—being prepared for the greater struggle in American politics into which he was soon to be precipitated. The schooling he himself was getting—bitterly, drastically—was priceless. It was not only in the clarifica-

[1]David B. Jones to Woodrow Wilson, November 12, 1907.

tion of his vision of the real "enemies of American democracy," but in the strategy of the struggle itself. He was learning by experience for the first time how men acted when under political, social, or economic pressure: he saw vividly the problems, mistakes, and dangers confronting the leader—lessons that were to prove invaluable in later years.

". . . as compared with the college politician, the real article seems like an amateur."[1]

In November, Wilson was in Tennessee, later in Maryland, and early in December in Indiana, speaking before alumni and educational associations. He was in a hotly rebellious mood:

"You know that with all our teaching we train nobody; you know that with all our instructing we educate nobody."[2]

But the strain of such labour, piled upon his earlier anxieties, proved too great for the overtaxed body; the motor too swift and powerful for the physical mechanism that bore it. It was not only the work, but the tragic conditions at Princeton. Wilson's breakdowns were often as much a matter of the emotions as of the physical mechanism. Mrs. Wilson always attributed his breakdown in 1908 to "the loss of the friend he took to his bosom."[3] To his intense and highly keyed nature the parting of a friendship, the destruction of cherished hopes, struck him down—just as new evidences of sympathy and affection restored him.

The controversy over the quads had indeed become intensely personal. Wives of members of the faculty and the Board took up the struggle; it was discussed at every dinner table. These debates did not end in 1907; they con-

[1] "Woodrow Wilson's Views," an interview with Mr. Wilson by H. B. Needham, published in the *Outlook* of August 26, 1911.

[2] Address before the Association of College and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, November 29, 1907.

[3] Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

tinued as long as Wilson remained at Princeton, and are alive enough to cause feeling to this day. While Hibben's opposition did not at once bring about a severance in his relationships with Wilson, the old intimacy was gone.

". . . it is the firm belief of those of us who knew all about that friendship, its origin, its growth and its cessation, that the final breach left a permanent scar on Mr. Wilson's spirit. Mr. Wilson remained afraid of that kind of a friendship until the end of his days."[1]

Friends saw with alarm the condition of Wilson's health.

"If a good solid rest is the best thing for you, you must take the medicine, not only because we love you but because we love Princeton and you are its best and biggest asset."[2]

On January 18th, he sailed for Bermuda, hoping to secure a real rest. He was suffering greatly from his old enemy, neuritis. He did not, unfortunately, put aside his work entirely. There were lectures to write!

"Bermuda is certainly the best place in the world in which to forget Princeton, at least Princeton as an organization and a problem; it would in any case afford me the most soothing rest; but a bit of work is tonic added. It keeps the blood moving aggressively. And, inasmuch as my knee keeps me from taking much exercise out of the house, this piece of business inside the house is all the more wholesome and opportune."[3]

He renewed his acquaintance with Mrs. Mary Allen Peck (Mrs. Hulbert) whom he had met the year before. Her home in the islands was a gathering place for witty and interesting people.

". . . Mark Twain . . . arrived on the boat this morning, and Mrs. Peck at once took possession of him. They are

[1]Memorandum prepared for the author by Professor Stockton Axson.

[2]Cleveland Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, December 18, 1907.

[3]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, February 4, 1908.

old friends. Indeed, she seems to know everybody that is worth knowing. She has been coming down here a great many winters, and everybody turns up here sooner or later, it would seem."[1]

A few days later he again wrote to his wife:

"Mark Twain has been down here between boats, and I have seen a good deal of him. He seems to like being with me. Yesterday Mrs. Peck gave him a lunch at her house and gathered a most interesting little group of garrison people to meet him. He was in great form and delighted everybody."[2]

Later the friendship with Mrs. Peck deepened. There were visits between the two families and a lively correspondence of the sort which always delighted Wilson. Often the letters, like those of many others of Wilson's friends, were read aloud in the family circle at Princeton, together with his own replies.[3] Some of them with copies of Wilson's responses remained among the President's papers at his death.

In later years this friendship was made the target of scandalous innuendo—the last resource of unscrupulous politics and one of the most difficult attacks for the public man to combat. Whisperings, rumours, gossip—nowhere anything to get hold of, nowhere any reputable person to challenge. Many public men have suffered from such campaigns of slander. Theodore Roosevelt met the absurd charge that he was a drunkard by suing for libel an inconsequential newspaper which had been overbold. That stopped it.

But in Wilson's case the charges never at any time reached the surface. No effort or expense was spared by Wilson's enemies, especially in 1916, to get at anything

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, January 26, 1908.

[2]February 4, 1908.

[3]Mrs. Sayre and the Misses Smith to the author.

they dared publish, knowing that such charges, if substantiated, would ruin him. It is significant that nothing was ever published. Yet the wildest lies were spread about and, unfortunately, widely believed. Human beings seem far more willing to accept the vilest scandals about a public man without a shred of real evidence than to admit the noblest public service. A good many people have read the letters to Mrs. Hulbert. They are just such letters as he was writing to other warm friends, both men and women—his views of public affairs, and public men, discussion of books, and the like.

The friendship with Mrs. Hulbert continued for years.[1] She experienced great sorrow and trouble, and Wilson made many efforts in the later years to assist her and her family. The very fact that scandalous stories were told only hardened him in his loyalty to his friend.

Wilson returned to Princeton on February 27, 1908. He was still suffering great discomfort from his neuritis.

"Neuritis has first and last made it so difficult to use my pen that I feel sure you will pardon the informality of my use of a typewriter in writing to report my safe arrival home."[2]

But he plunged at once into the quad campaign—complicated now by the growing controversy over the graduate college. In March he made extended trips, speaking at Baltimore and Chicago, and in Wisconsin and Connecticut.

"I have been rushing . . . constantly from one alumni meeting to another and from appointment to appointment. . . ."[3]

His address to the alumni at Chicago was powerful, direct, even bitter with irony—and yet an appeal for un-

[1]Mrs. Hulbert to the author.

[2]Letter to Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick, March 20, 1908.

[3]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, March 21, 1908.

derstanding and support in what he believed to be a "vital necessity" to the university they all loved.

". . . in a country like this it is absolutely necessary that we should do democratic thinking.

"The particular threat that seems to me most alarming to our life at the present moment is that we are beginning to think in classes . . . that we are not putting our minds in the true American attitude of trying to combine interests, of trying to ignore particular interests, if it be necessary to do so in order to combine them; of putting ourselves in absolute sympathy with that order of life which has made America and which will preserve it if it is to be preserved,—that order under which every man's chance was rendered as free as every other's and under which there was no preferment of persons or classes in the lawmaking of the country; the feeling that you must not discriminate against any class, and must not discriminate in favour of any class; that there must be absolutely a free field and no favour for anybody."

He goes on to make the application, also so near his deepest conviction, to the university:

"Now, if that is the case, you must organize the life of your Universities also in that spirit. . . .

"I have proposed a systematic change in the life of the University. I believe more and more as the months go by in the necessity of that change; moreover I am a good fighter, gentlemen,—on the whole I would rather fight than not. . . ." [Applause.]

In Chicago, Wilson was in friendly territory, and his address was received with rounds of applause. He counted his visit there both interesting and successful.[1]

But the struggle from this point onward grew steadily more difficult. The controversy over the graduate college was becoming more intense, tending to occupy Wilson's

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, March 21, 1908.

attention. His health was again precarious; and in June he sailed for Europe.

"I have found the past year go very hard with me. I feel, as you know, blocked in plans upon which I feel the successful administration of the University, both as a teaching body and as a wholesome society, depends, and for which I can find no substitute, and in these circumstances it has been a struggle with me all the year to keep in any sort of spirits. I must try, as you must, to divest my mind of the matter altogether at least for the summer. . . ."[1]

Whatever unhappiness Wilson may have felt over the defeat of his quad proposals—and it was bitter indeed—his struggle seemed actually to increase his prestige; and if it made him enemies, it also bound his friends, who understood the absolute sincerity of his purpose, more strongly to him than ever before; friends who were later to do yeoman service in his political campaigns. How men love a fighter! In a letter of June 12, 1908, David B. Jones wrote Wilson ". . . that the only thing that makes work on the Princeton Board attractive and worthwhile in my opinion is your effort to reëstablish it as a seat of learning. When the revolt against present conditions sets in, what you are now saying and doing will be recognized and rewarded."

On April 12, 1908, Professor Harper wrote from Switzerland:

"It has been a great pleasure, which I wish you to share, to observe how the *prestige* of Princeton has advanced in England and Scotland. It seems to be understood that we stand for a real education."

His record at Princeton was also bringing him distinguished honours in the greater world. In January[2] he

[1] Letter to Cleveland H. Dodge, June 18, 1908.

[2] 1908.

was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters; he had become a member of the Board of the Carnegie Foundation; he was more than ever on call for addresses at distinguished gatherings; he was tempted to accept college presidencies elsewhere. He had already been given no fewer than nine honorary degrees by the foremost universities of the nation. He was being more and more considered as a possible political leader.

His fight had a peculiar effect upon the student body. His attitude for a time made him unpopular with influential groups connected with the clubs, and yet whenever he appeared at a student gathering he was vociferously cheered. After one of these meetings a professor who was present asked, "Those students certainly do not sympathize with Wilson's plans. How do you account for such a demonstration?"

Another of those present replied, "They know a man when they see him."

At Commencement a student song ran thus:

> Here's to Wilson, King Divine,
> Who rules this place along with Fine.
> We hear he's soon to leave this town
> To take on Teddy Roosevelt's crown.

Wilson was right when he declared passionately to the Chicago alumni in March:

"... I want you to understand what the penalty of my sitting down is,—somebody else has got to do the job; it has got to be a systematic job, and it has got to be thoroughly done."

The evils were there and must sooner or later be met. Many friends of Princeton clearly recognized this fact. Years later, J. Lionberger Davis, a trustee, wrote to Wilson:

"My thoughts have been going back to the days in

Princeton (of which I am now an Alumni Trustee). I see the same old forces—the same antagonisms. The old issues were never settled and never will be until they are settled right. As Princeton grows we must adopt the principles for which you laboured; and, whether we label them 'College System' or 'The Oxford and Cambridge Plan' they will still be substantially the same as the so-called 'Quad-System' of more than a decade ago."[1]

It is significant that ten years after Wilson's struggle[2] President Hibben was attacking the flagrant abuses of the club system in terms almost as scathing as any that Wilson ever applied. Richard Cleveland, a son of Grover Cleveland, then a student at Princeton, denounced the clubs and vowed never to join one of them. Seventeen years later, soon after the death of Woodrow Wilson, the problem again arose, bitterer than ever. A committee appointed by President Hibben made a long report that might almost have been written by Wilson himself.

"It was felt by all representative Princeton undergraduates that the system [of club elections] had become intolerable. So strong was this conviction that a petition was signed by the president of the Senior Class, the managers and captains of all athletic teams, the chairman of *The Princetonian*, and the presidents of all of the clubs, requesting President Hibben to abolish 'bicker week.'"[3]

The report expresses dissatisfaction with the club system, and gropes for a remedy.

"Our life here should and must be one complete whole, incapable of segregation into separate compartments. At the present time it is evident that the social life suffers by separation from the intellectual life, and clearly the intellectual life suffers from a lack of spontaneous and

[1]December 19, 1921.

[2]February 22, 1917.

[3]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, May 21, 1924.

whole-hearted recognition of its worth in our clubs. Surely the social life cannot for all time be kept separate from the intellectual life. If it is so kept, our intellectual life must suffer because of the inevitable over emphasis on social distinctions. . . .

"The present exaggerated emphasis upon false values and standards and the consequent divorce of our social from our academic life threatens, as we have already pointed out, our whole purpose and direction as an educational institution. . . .

"There must be a fundamental change of viewpoint toward the whole social life of Princeton."[1]

There the matter rests with the problem still unsolved. But the little world of Princeton may yet accept her prophet!

[1]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, May 21, 1924.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GRADUATE COLLEGE CONTROVERSY

Our colleges . . . should conceive of themselves as organizations into which young men are received as into a family of free persons bound together by common obligations and common privileges, living together, teacher and pupil, in an intercourse of common advantage, its main object study; its diversions diversions, not occupations; its sport sport, not a competitive business; its society a free society of equals, not a congeries of rival social groups.

Address at the 75th anniversary of Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania, October 16, 1908.

. . . a college . . . must become a community of scholars and pupils, —a free community but a very real one, in which democracy may work its reasonable triumphs of accommodation, its vital processes of union.

Address before the Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Cambridge, Massachusetts, July 1, 1909.

Though the university may dispense with professional schools, professional schools may not dispense with the university. Professional schools have nowhere their right atmosphere and association except where they are parts of a university and share its spirit and method.

Inaugural address as president of Princeton, October 25, 1902.

Education comes from the association of an immature mind with a mature mind. It is a process which has to do with training minds how to handle themselves; and nothing trains a mind how to handle itself so much as association with a mind that already knows how to handle itself,—as the close and intimate daily association with masters of the mind.

Address before the New Jersey State Teachers' Association, December 28, 1909.

I THE BATTLE THICKENS

WOODROW WILSON'S life was one of intensities and extremes; blazing successes, disastrous defeats; and the same excess of life which led to one led also to the other. It was the kind of life which, if it makes for high

drama, is rarely happy. To be a prophet, a crusader, an innovator, is to suffer. The prophet may indeed triumph—after he is dead.

The curtain of the college year went down in June, 1908, upon a dismal scene in Wilson's life. When he sailed away to England on the Anchor Liner *California*,[1] he was near discouragement. It was not doubt, as in 1896, but defeat—the first great defeat of his life. And he had not as yet learned the technique of defeat—most important knowledge for the leader! His health was broken. He had been suffering acutely from neuritis. He was worn out with the struggle of recent months. Old and deep friendships had been broken. His Board of Trustees and his faculty were hopelessly divided upon the issue that lay closest to his heart—the quads. Powerful groups of his "constituency," the alumni, were alienated; his hold upon the student body, which he prized deeply, was temporarily shaken. The problems of the graduate college, though for the moment quiescent, with the decisions in his favour, were by no means settled. His feeling that a struggle was imminent was so strong that, when certain of his trustees, urging a rest, offered to defray the expense of a trip abroad, he declined the offer:

"I may have to oppose some of these men upon the vital educational policies of Princeton," he told his wife, "and I should be trussed up if I accepted such favours from them."

There were other causes for discouragement. To Wilson, his beliefs, his convictions, involved his entire nature. He was profoundly concerned in the political welfare of the nation, as he had been all his life, and there seemed no light anywhere upon the horizon; no leadership in meeting problems which he considered of the utmost gravity. The Republican Convention had met four days before he

[1] June 20th.

sailed, and nominated Roosevelt's "residuary legatee," William H. Taft. The Democratic Convention, soon to assemble in Denver, was certain to be dominated by Bryan, in whom Wilson had no confidence whatever.

". . . Mr. Bryan . . . is the most charming and lovable of men personally, but foolish and dangerous in his theoretical beliefs."[1]

Under such circumstances, the talk of his own nomination for the Presidency on the Democratic ticket seemed moonshine: although there is evidence that some of his friends regarded it even then as a possibility, and urged him not to get too far away from the cables.

"I shall, as I said, be here till the Democratic convention has adjourned, which will probably be the end of the week, unless Mr. Bryan handles *his* convention more expeditiously than Mr. Roosevelt handled his,—and I do not see how that would be possible. I must admit that I feel a bit silly waiting on the possibility of the impossible happening. . . . There is evidently not a ghost of a chance of defeating Bryan—but since Col. H.[2] *is* there I might as well be here."[3]

Before he sailed, covert suggestions were also made that he be nominated for the Vice Presidency at Denver on the ticket: Bryan and Wilson. While such a spectacular turn in events would have lifted him out of a morass of difficulties at Princeton, he would not for a moment consider it. He left positive instructions with his friend Stockton Axson that, if such a move were made at Denver, he was to decline it, categorically.

Wilson possessed, throughout his life, an unusual power of recuperation, both physical and mental. His personal physician in the crowded later years, Dr. Cary T. Gray-

[1]From an interview with Woodrow Wilson, March 10, 1908.

[2]Colonel George Harvey.

[3]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 6, 1908, from Edinburgh.

son, often commented upon Wilson's ability to rest, which he attributed to his strength of mental discipline. He could "turn off his mind." He could "refuse to worry." Therefore, he could sleep. On the voyage to Europe, Wilson wrote:

"I have slept, slept, slept, morning, afternoon, and night, some twelve or fourteen out of every twenty-four hours, and am beginning to feel thoroughly rested."[1]

He tells also of his exercise:

"I have also exercised systematically, by *running* every day. The quiet, unoccupied deck just outside my stateroom has afforded a clear, secluded course, and there I have run morning and afternoon. It has been delightful exercise, much less monotonous and much more invigorating than walking."[2]

As for his weary mind, he turns to the "solace of poetry and beauty."

"The only book I brought with me was the Oxford Book of English verse. . . . I have even read some *new* poems in it—I mean poems I had not read before—though my habit is to read the familiar ones over and over again. I find that I *must* keep my attention fixed on something all the while, to keep Princeton discouragements out, and to prevent myself from examining old wounds so curiously as to open them again."[3]

Once on the country roads of Scotland, his spirits began to revive. We have touches of the eager enthusiasm, the "appetite for life," of earlier visits.

He visits the "bleak, unhomelike little town" of Ecclefechan, where Carlyle was born. He reads with vast interest from "the latest volumes of Carlyle's letters," and found them "charming, every page irradiated with

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, June 26, 1908.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, July 10, 1908.

some flash of his singular genius for *perceiving*, either a person or a thing."

On Sunday he goes to the Scotch kirk, and because he is in his "blue shirt, blue tie and cycling shorts," the grave ushers give him a seat at the back where he "felt like a little boy or some uninitiated yokel looking on."

He must have made an odd appearance indeed, this future President of the United States, riding his bicycle along the country roads, mostly in the rain, with a long cloak "much bespattered with mud" over his shoulders, and the *Oxford Book of English Verse* bulging his pocket. When at length he reached Grasmere, his healing was complete.

". . . I set off straightway by the Nab Scar path to Rydal. Ah, my dear, my dear, what a walk it was! Every foot of it was eloquent of you—and of all my dear ones. . . .

"And then I found the Yates! . . . I knocked at the door, Mrs. Yates opened it, and we faced one another with delight. She almost embraced me. Yates himself was in the garden up the hillside, putting in some lettuce, and, before my greetings with Mrs. Yates were over, I had him, too, by the hand. Mrs. Yates drew us both into the house, one arm about her husband, the other for the moment about me."[1]

From this point onward the summer was sheer delight, with steadily improving health and spirits. Beauty, simplicity, friendship, the sheer loveliness of nature, restored him.

"You know how broad and gracious the slopes of dear Wansfell are,—like some great nourishing breast, it always seemed to me. . . . Ulpha Fell . . . has infinitely wide and rich expanses of green slope, sweeping up from the wooded spaces of the valley, about the stream, in curves of exquisite beauty. One wonders at the sustained *drawing*, no mistake anywhere! . . . I did not know until last

[1]Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 16, 1908.

night that I was coming here,—too late to get a Wordsworth and read the sonnets. I at any rate saw the whole valley with fresh eyes, and on a perfectly glorious afternoon."[1]

He writes in the beginning of August:

". . . I am conscious of growing every day more normal both in nerve and muscle, and, consequently, in mind also."[2]

He sits again for his portrait to Yates;[3] he visits Theodore Marburg, whom he enjoys, "a very interesting fellow, well read, and well opinionated, in my own lines of study"; and finally he goes for a visit, planned long before, to Andrew Carnegie in Scotland, where he had a most interesting experience.

"The Castle is like a luxurious hotel. Some twenty or twenty-five persons sit down to every meal. Guests are received, for the most part (if—say—of less than Cabinet rank) by the servants; shown to their rooms; and received by the host and hostess when all assemble for the next meal. The list of guests while I was there was, so far as I can recall it: Lord Morley (i. e. Mr. John Morley translated to the House of Lords, and an old goose for accepting the translation!); Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid; the Baroness von Suttner (a very fat Austrian lady whom Mr. Carnegie introduced as having won the Nobel prize for the best book written in promotion of international peace, and whom I had to escort as far as Perth yesterday —with the incidental inconvenience that she rode first class and I third!); a Mr. Moschelles, a portrait painter, etc., etc., once a familiar friend of Du Maurier's and one of those persons born to have and to write Reminiscences; Mr. Shaw, the present Lord Advocate for Scotland in the

[1] Letter to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 20, 1908.

[2] *Ibid.*, August 3, 1908.

[3] Yates's finished portrait now hangs in Nassau Hall at Princeton.

Cabinet,—a jolly good fellow and my favourite in the list,—and Mrs. Shaw, a sweet Scottish lady with no conversation to speak of; a young Englishman named Hernden, who was generally out shooting (for I reached Skibo the very day the shooting season opened) and whose identity I could not establish, even by inquiry; Mr. 'Tom'. Miller, a lifelong chum of Mr. Carnegie's and a most docile creature; Mr. Reid's son Ogden, a Yale man just through with his bar examinations; and a Mr. Sam'l Dennis, his wife (very pretty and entertaining), and their young son and daughter,—the son a Junior in Princeton. Mr. Dennis is the son of an old friend of Mr. Carnegie's. There was everything to do that you can think of: hunting, fishing, golfing, sailing, swimming (in the most beautiful swimming pool I ever saw,—the water tempered to about 70°), driving, motoring, billiards, tennis, croquet; and there was perfect freedom to do as you pleased. . . . It was an interesting experience, of which I shall have many things to tell you not suitable to be written down. My opinion of my host, in particular, had better be reserved for the modulations of the voice, rather than of the pen. Mrs. Carnegie is *very* sweet and true, and sent you every cordial message. I like and admire her extremely. I was, of course, very glad to see Mr. Morley (as I will take the liberty of calling him still), and enjoyed what I heard of his talk very much. He came only twenty-four hours before I left. What he said had that flavour of sincerity and simplicity which I so love in the best Englishmen, and was expressed as you would imagine he would express it,—with an elegance natural to a real man of letters and a deliberation (such as I greatly admire but have not) characteristic of a man who thinks both before and while he speaks. I was a good deal shocked to find him old and bent and a bit feeble."[1]

[1]Letters to Ellen Axson Wilson, August 13, 16, 1908.

His summer was more than a rest, it was a veritable re-creation. He returned to America in September,[1] not only with new courage, but with his faith in the validity of his ideals, the truth of his vision, fully restored: all the prophet and crusader in him newly inspired.

"He goes away to-day and there will be a mighty vacuum in Rydal—he has been a part of our summer. . . . He was like a boy last night in his light-heartedness. You wouldn't think he ever had a care—it has done him good to come over—and he returns with a new grip of things.—He came with his heart rather heavy—told us at once—it seemed to do him good to unburden it to us. . . . Well, he has gone back home with renewed vigour and love of a whole neighbourhood."[2]

Wilson well knew of the struggle to come, and was resolved, as never before, to husband all of his resources. During the summer he had "thought clear" upon his problems. He knew exactly what he intended to do: it was to carry the fight along the whole line more vigorously than ever before. He believed intensely that he was right.

First, he would not accept defeat upon his proposals for social coördination. The purpose of a university was intellectual, the "things of the mind." Everything else must take a secondary and contributory place in the "new synthesis."[2]

Second, the graduate college must be knit firmly into the general scheme of the university: there must be complete unity of control.

Third, no matter how the fall elections went, whether Taft or Bryan was elected, he proposed to go straight forward with his effort to clarify and lead American political opinion. It was not because he wanted or ex-

[1] On the *Caledonia*.

[2] Letter from Fred Yates to Mrs. Wilson, sent by Mr. Wilson when he left Rydal, September, 1908.

pected public office, but because it was his duty as well as his interest as a citizen to "serve the nation." It was in accordance with the "solemn covenant" he had made with his classmate twenty-seven years before; it was the essence of his ideal for the university: "Princeton for the Nation's Service."

Such definiteness of purpose, such clarity of mind, throughout his life was always a great element in Wilson's strength. Few men have any clear-cut objectives, and, therefore, few get anywhere: Wilson always knew exactly where he was going, what he wanted.

In his very first address at the opening of the university, September 24th,[1] he struck the keynote:

"The objects of a university *intellectual.*

"All else incidental and by way of corollary."[2]

"Unless you take seriously the intellectual spirit of the place," he told the entering class, "this is not the place for you."[3]

This theme he drove home in speech after speech during the following school year. At Haverford College in October he said:

"The only legitimate object of a college is to train young men to the duties and responsibilities of life, to quicken their faculty to comprehend and achieve the things of which they and the nation itself stand in need. It is not its proper and legitimate object merely to provide young gentlemen with a pleasant and stimulating life."

Many of his friends, some of the best men of the university, both trustees and faculty, were strongly with him. The problem of the clubs, owing to a breakdown of

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[1]It happened to be the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the famous Commencement of 1783, when General Washington and the Federal Congress were present at similar exercises in Nassau Hall. Princeton was at that time temporarily the nation's capital.

[2]From his own notes.

[3]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, September 30, 1908.

the treaties among them, was growing more acute. Cleveland Dodge endeavoured to interest Carnegie in giving a large sum of money to begin building for the quads. Wilson himself tried to reach Carnegie through Frank A. Vanderlip, to whom he wrote:

"I wonder if you remember a conversation I had with you last winter about interesting Mr. Carnegie in giving the money that would enable us to put into operation at Princeton a system of life which would bring our college spirit and purpose back to something like its old democracy of spirit and action and supply us with an atmosphere in which serious work would be possible and even natural? . . .

"The importance of the whole subject has grown even beyond my expectations. . . . It has come to the point where I must move forward, or else turn in an utterly different direction to the utter marring of all I had conceived and planned. The college world that has lately begun to look to us for leadership will be disappointed and a great opportunity lost. The thought is very hard for me to bear. I must get the money.

"It is three and one-half millions. I do not know from whom I could get it if not from Mr. Carnegie. . . ."[1]

In this letter he also reveals, guardedly, his growing feeling that he was reaching the point where he might have to "turn to something else":

"Things have come to a turning point with me for reasons which I can explain to you. If I cannot do this, I must turn to something else than mere college administration,—forced, not by my colleagues but by my mind and convictions, to the impossibility of continuing at things I do not believe in. . . ."

Opponents of the quads, feeling that the issue was by

[1]This letter has been transcribed from Wilson's stenographic copy; the exact date is uncertain.

no means dead, took new alarm, there were sharp exchanges in trustees' meetings and among the faculty. Each side in the Board sought to strengthen itself by filling vacancies with men who would be supporters of its views. In the previous June,[1] while Wilson was on his way to Europe, Grover Cleveland had died. Princeton thus lost her most distinguished trustee and Dean West his most powerful supporter. Wilson had always been a great admirer of Cleveland—"short of adulation"—he had written a number of highly appreciative articles regarding him, and had taken a prominent part in the felicitations which marked the celebration of his seventieth birthday. On one occasion, during the years of their friendship, Cleveland heard Wilson read aloud "The Happy Warrior," and it became his favourite poem and was read at his funeral. Wilson was greatly shocked by the news of his death. He wrote to his wife, from Scotland, June 29th:

"Of course the news of Mr. Cleveland's death met us at Moville, the Irish landing port. I was greatly shocked and astonished. When I saw Mrs. Cleveland the previous Friday she was unusually cheerful about him and expressed with some touch of confidence the hope that she would be able to take him to Tamworth. I do not think that my knowledge of how he failed and disappointed us during the past few years . . . will long obscure my admiration for his great qualities and his singularly fine career."

Wilson had of course deeply resented Cleveland's persistent championship, as a trustee, of policies that he felt were dangerous for Princeton; but he felt that Cleveland, who had been failing in health, was greatly influenced by Dean West. Cleveland, on his part, resented actions of Wilson which appeared to thwart West's aims. He went to the point of charging bad faith. A remark of Wilson's which spread about the little town as such remarks will—

[1] June 24, 1908.

however true it might have been—did not make matters better, especially in the families:

"After all, what does Grover Cleveland know about a university?"[1]

Cleveland's place in the Board was to be filled, and likewise that of David B. Jones, who had been one of Wilson's staunchest supporters. During the next two years, there was a constant and severe factional struggle going on for the election of new trustees.

While Wilson's supreme interest continued to be centred in the social coördination of the university, there were also problems connected with the graduate college which required final settlement. He did not, however, in the fall of 1908, and the spring of 1909, feel that they were at all menacing. He had been steadily winning in his contentions as to policies relating to the college—carrying his Board and his faculty with him. In March (1908) there had been a vote in the trustees' committee on the crucial problem of the site for the location of Thomson College for which the money from Mrs. Swann's bequest was now available. Wilson had steadily demanded that the quadrangle for the graduate college be set at "the heart of the university."[2] When the "informal expression of preference" was taken, five trustees voted with him for a site on the campus: McCormick, Jacobus, Garrett, Sheldon, Cadwalader, and Wilson himself.

Three trustees voted for locating the college off campus at Merwick: Cleveland, Pyne, and West.[2]

Wilson's view had also prevailed in the choice of the regular architect of the university, Ralph Adams Cram, for the preparation of the plans, thus assuring the unity of design which he desired.

[1]Professor Bliss Perry to the author.

[2]Merwick was not again considered by the university authorities. Chancellor Magie rendered an opinion that it would be illegal to place Thomson College there, because it was not a part of the grounds of the university.

Cram, after studying the whole situation, advised the building of the college near the site of Prospect, the president's house.

". . . if intimate association between the Graduate and Undergraduate departments is desirable, or even unobjectionable, then the site I have suggested is one of great strategic importance, since the Graduate School would then be in the most convenient possible position with regard to the laboratories, the recitation rooms of McCosh Hall, the Chapel, the Library and the Art Department. . . .

"As Supervising Architect, I am strongly impressed with the necessity of a building up and tying together of all the parts of the University, avoiding the old park idea, with isolated buildings dotted around in various points, and recurring to the scheme in vogue in Oxford and Cambridge since the XVth century, whereby the several parts are tied together into one consistent whole."[1]

On April 9, 1908, the Board of Trustees had formally adopted Cram's plan[2] for locating the college on the campus "about midway between '79 Hall and the President's House."[2] Grover Cleveland had previously expressed his approval of the site.

In short, the action all along the line had been exactly in accordance with Wilson's fundamental policy of unity. He was well pleased with the decisions of the trustees. But he wanted now to go to the root of the matter and remove the cause of dissension—which lay in the divided authority as between the president of the university and the dean of the graduate school. There must be clear-cut responsible leadership. "Whether President Wilson is, after all, to be trusted to lead in Princeton affairs" was, as an alumnus wrote at a later time to the Princeton

[1]R. A. Cram to Woodrow Wilson, March 30, 1908.

[2]Minutes of the Board of Trustees.

Alumni Weekly, the "vital issue at stake." Many of the trustees, by the fall of 1908, saw clearly that much of the trouble grew out of the position of independence in which Dean West had been placed when his office was created:

"In your consultation with Dean Fine can you two not work out some general scheme which will involve reorganizing the relation to your Presidential authority of the present Deanship of the Graduate School? You may think it best to pass it over at present—for we have large schemes in view as to the residential quad. development of the Graduate College . . . but it would be well to give the problem earnest thought."[1]

Wilson replied:

"We are very seriously taking up the matter of the University relationships with the Dean of the Graduate School. . . ."[2]

There were other potent reasons for a revision of the by-laws relating to the powers of Dean West. Some of the strong new professors who had come to Princeton, not only disapproved but feared Dean West's autocratic and unregulated control of the affairs of the graduate school. Dean Fine learned of Professor Capps's disapproval soon after Capps came to Princeton, and Professor Conklin, upon his arrival, shared the same view. It appears that Professor Abbott hesitated about accepting a call to Princeton unless, in the conduct of the graduate school, the dean were made subject first to the authority of the faculty and through the faculty to the Board of Trustees.

It was felt by these men that the wholly unregulated control of the graduate school was one reason why Princeton lagged so far behind Yale and Harvard in securing graduate students. As Wilson explained to an alumni meeting in New York:

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[1]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, October 28, 1908.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, November 11, 1908.

"From 1892 until a year ago this month, the number of graduate students in Princeton University devoting their whole time to graduate study had hardly noticeably increased at all: it had run along the 40 line, a little below or a little above. During that same period a university which had been offering no more than Princeton offered had built up her graduate numbers from 76 to 385: I mean Yale University. What was the difference? Princeton was offering graduate courses just as Yale was; Princeton had men whom the scholars of the country knew to be as capable of giving graduate instruction as the Yale faculty were; graduate students went to Yale; they did not come to Princeton. What was the explanation?

"There are several explanations. In the first place, the organization of graduate work at Princeton was not of a character to give us success in that field. The graduate school of Princeton University was, by the by-laws of the Board of Trustees, kept during most of those years in the hands of a single officer, who chose his own committee from the faculty of the University; and the faculty of the University (I speak by the book) felt that it had nothing to do with the matter. The energy and enthusiasm of the faculty was not behind the enterprise."[1]

In short, the graduate school was a one-man affair—Dean West was that man—and the faculty would not follow him. To continue such a divided and decentralizing arrangement was a vital defect in administration.

Accordingly, at a meeting of the trustees' committee on February 5, 1909, Dr. Jacobus moved a substitute for Chapter VIII of the by-laws whereby the administrative powers formerly held by the dean should be transferred to a committee of the faculty of which the dean should be chairman.[2] This by-law was prepared by Dean Fine and

[1] Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, April 13, 1910.

[2] "The Proposed Graduate College," pp. 32–33.

Professors Capps and Conklin, and was shown by Dean Fine to Mr. Pyne who heartily approved of it.

Wilson himself, while he was wholly in sympathy with the effort to bring the graduate school really into the organization of the university, doubted whether this method would accomplish the end sought. He had reached the conclusion that Dean West would not submit to any control and would ultimately have to be eliminated altogether if real unity in university affairs was to be achieved. As he wrote later to Dr. Jacobus:

"My judgment did not at all approve of the compromise which set up the committee of the Faculty. I thought then that just our present disappointment was inevitable."[1]

But he consented to try it and hope for the best.

At the April (1909) meeting of the Board of Trustees, the new by-law placing the control of graduate affairs in the hands of a faculty committee was adopted, and Wilson named the members of it: Dean West, Dean Fine, and Professors Daniels, Hibben, Capps, and Conklin.

While these provisions for faculty control were being carried forward, disagreements were developing in regard to the nature of the graduate college building itself. West was a determined and resourceful fighter, not the kind to yield to control. If he could not have the college located where he wanted it, he would at least have it constructed in accordance with his own ideas. During the late spring of 1908, he and Pyne and Butler, the master of Merwick, worked with the architect over the plans for the building. When they were submitted in March, 1909, the new faculty committee,[2] to say nothing of Wilson, were amazed by the lavishness of the arrangements. It was a long way indeed from "plain living and high thinking." Henry B.

[1]October 29, 1909.

[2]Although this committee was not officially appointed until late in April, 1909, the members were called together in March in order to consider and expedite the plans for the graduate college.

Thompson, of the building committee of the Board of Trustees, wrote to Edward W. Sheldon:

"The new Faculty Committee of the Graduate School do not take kindly to the plans of the new school; and I am in entire sympathy with them. The building is on too expensive a scale for the purpose intended. The attempt to heat all rooms by wood fires, and give each student a separate bathroom, etc., etc., does not appeal to me. I think the rooms can be materially cut down in size, and the bathing arrangements put in the basement, under the same conditions as our undergraduate dormitories. These changes will materially reduce the expense; in fact, Capps and Conklin say very emphatically that the type of student they expect to get could not afford to live under the conditions as proposed. . . .

"I think Wilson is in entire sympathy with Capps and Conklin, but shows a strong desire to do things in such a way that friction will not be created with West and Butler; in fact, his mental attitude now is most admirable, and I was delighted to find him in such good physical condition."[1]

Other trustees were equally outspoken:

"I must confess that I am utterly discouraged at the luxurious views which Dean West seems to have regarding the Graduate students' living. If these are carried out, it will result in simply making the Graduate School a great big upper class Club."[2]

Wilson himself was deeply concerned. What he had been seeking was real democratic relationships in the university, a devotion to the stern ideals of the intellectual life; and here was a proposal for a building that would make it difficult for students of modest means to attend Princeton at all. He wrote to Dr. Jacobus:

[1]H. B. Thompson to E. W. Sheldon, March 17, 1909.

[2]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, March 20, 1909.

"I understand, though I was not able to be present at the meeting (indeed, I did not desire to be), that it was the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen of that committee that the plans are in every way too costly and elaborate. I think that what we should insist upon is that the plans be sent back to the architects for a thorough reconsideration upon several points; that we should ask, in the first place, that if possible the whole scale of the building be reduced and its appointments rendered more simple by the elimination of many things, such as very numerous baths and very large studies and an unnecessary number of public rooms, which are now the chief features of the plan."[1]

The fact was that West was really and deeply interested in these very things, these outer elegancies and beauties. Consider his dream of a dining room for his graduate college:

"The interior should be furnished in oak, and special care is to be given to the panelling and furnishing of the dining-hall. This hall will be lighted with Gothic windows. Around the walls will be hung portraits of men famous in our academic history. The branching roof will be carved in oak, or perhaps in fan-tracery of stone. Above the panelling at the western end is to be placed a great window. At the opposite end is to be the entrance, with its screen and gallery, where an organ may be set. Every evening the entire college is to dine in hall, the students seated at two or three long tables running lengthwise, and the professors and visitors at the high table under the western window. As occasion arises, the hall will be available for musical recitals or informal gatherings."[2]

West was thus primarily concerned with housing, with

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, March 23, 1909.

[2]Dean West's brochure, "The Proposed Graduate College of Princeton University," p. 19.

sites, appearances, ceremonials, Wilson primarily with the power and sincerity of the life that was being housed—and the ultimate service of that life to the nation. Like many a champion of an idea of his own creation, excellent in itself, West lost his sense of proportion and besides indulging in extravagance in his conception of what the college should be, felt that it should have the right of way over the endowment of professorships and the material equipment for scholarly research which to other members of the faculty seemed the first need of Princeton in the development of a great graduate school.

On the other hand, West's intense interest in these very outward habiliments, his love of beauty, contributed in no small degree in giving preëminence of architectural distinction to the Princeton of to-day. He was in a position of great influence after the Sesquicentennial celebration of 1896, and it was he who persuaded Pyne, and with Pyne's help, the trustees, to adopt the academic Gothic style for Blair Hall, the beauty of which determined the style that has since prevailed. So many of the good things of the world come out of an excess of qualities, an excess of devotion or enthusiasm, an excess of faith, that sometimes limits or destroys the possessor of it!

Another element in the situation during the spring of 1909 gave Wilson great concern. There were being carried on, quite independent of the president of the university or of the trustees as a whole, efforts to solicit funds for the graduate college. It began to be whispered about that "large gifts for the graduate college" were expected, about which the president knew nothing and was not consulted. Wilson wrote to Dr. Jacobus, March 27, 1909:

"All of this movement of groups in entire independence of each other makes me very uneasy and really renders proper government of the University impossible."

On May 10th, Dean West handed to Wilson a letter

from William Cooper Procter, an alumnus of Princeton, class of 1883, dated May 8th, making a conditional offer of $500,000 for the graduate college. It was addressed to Dean West and was made dependent upon a change of the graduate college from the already settled location on the campus to "some other site" which, the donor prescribed, "shall be satisfactory to me." Here it is in full:

May 8, 1909.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR WEST:

I have read with much interest the book prepared by you outlining the scheme of the Proposed Graduate College of Princeton University. Believing in its great value to Princeton, provided the scheme is carried out on these lines, I take pleasure in making the following proposition for acceptance by the Board of Trustees.

I will give the sum of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars to be expended for such objects, in furtherance of the plans, as I may designate, provided an equal sum is secured for the Graduate College in gifts or responsible pledges by May 1st, 1910. I do this on the understanding that my subscription is to be paid in ten equal quarterly installments beginning July 15th, 1910, and that the money for the other subscriptions or gifts shall be paid into the Treasury of the University not later than October 15th, 1912.

I have visited and examined the proposed site at Prospect, and beg to say, that in my opinion, it is not suitable for such a College. I feel, therefore, obliged to say that this offer is made upon the further understanding that some other site be chosen, which shall be satisfactory to me.

Yours very truly,
WM. COOPER PROCTER.[1]

It was perhaps natural that Mr. Procter should first speak of his intended gift to Dean West. He knew him more intimately, having been a pupil of West's years earlier.[2] But it is singular that he should have visited

[1] Published in the Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, February 16, 1910.

[2] R. E. Annin, *Woodrow Wilson*, p. 47.

Princeton to examine the proposed site and never called upon the president of the university; and if Dean West were really acting in harmony with the president in his acceptance of Cram's location of the college on the campus, as he had declared, it is strange that he did not take the president into his confidence when he learned of the possible donation and the remarkable conditions attached to it—that the donor, not the constituted authorities of the university, should decide where one of its most important buildings should stand. It is scarcely surprising that Wilson should have been both piqued and alarmed. Here was a proposal that cut at the very roots of his policies. It gave new power to the forces of decentralization and exclusiveness which he dreaded; it threatened the unified control of the educational policies as well as the control of the building programme of the university for which he had fought continuously. With such power of money behind him, Dean West's plans for the graduate college which had been so sharply criticized by both trustees and faculty were in danger of again prevailing. Who could fight $500,000?

No one, however, could have met the problem in a more reasonable spirit than Wilson. He determined at once, as his letters show, to do his best to meet Procter's wishes and yet make the gift conform to the principles and ideals which he conceived to be best for the university.

"The letter from Mr. Procter speaks for itself, and it is of course deeply gratifying, if we can manage to meet his terms. . . . I think there is a hopeful prospect of coming to some satisfactory conclusion which we can report to the full committee at a convenient time before the Board meets."[1]

The whole university world of Princeton was, of course, thrilled by the announcement of so large a gift.

[1] Letter to Cyrus H. McCormick, May 15, 1909.

It was a time when institutions were eager to secure money on any conditions (has that time passed?) regardless of ultimate ideals or purposes. Anything that contributed to bigness was a triumph! Wilson had therefore to direct his efforts to make the gift serve the purpose of the university, as he saw it, with extreme circumspection. There were many conferences, animated discussions. Mr. Procter met the committee in New York in June and afterward visited Princeton. Wilson argued that under the Swann bequest the graduate college could legally be built only on the campus, and urged his reasons for the complete coördination of the graduate and undergraduate work. But Procter in a letter gave his decision of the site question—which was exactly opposed to Wilson's purposes:

". . . my preference still remains with Merwick. If this does not meet with your views and those of the Board of Trustees, I will accept the Golf Links. . . ."[1]

In short, here were vital policies of the university being determined not by the president, the trustees, the faculty, but by a generous donor of $500,000, an alumnus who loved Princeton and desired to serve her, but who had made no study of educational policies, knew nothing of the difficult business of conducting a university.[2]

So closed the college year in June, 1909, with the problem of the graduate college, which Wilson had thought settled, more acute than ever.

It might appear, in recounting these struggles within the inner life of the university, with Wilson defeated in his quad proposals and fighting hard on the issue of the graduate college, that his own prestige and that of the university was suffering. The exact reverse was true.

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[1] W. C. Procter to Woodrow Wilson, June 7, 1909.

[2] William Cooper Procter, of the firm of Procter & Gamble, one of the largest and most successful soap manufacturers in the United States.

When a strong man fights he adds to his strength. Where there is fierce activity, a sharp clash of ideals, men know there is life. Opposition, even abuse, only helps to enlist public interest. The whole country was turning to look at Princeton and discussing the problems involved with more or less darkness of view. Several outstanding things were plain to the great outer world.

First of all, the institution was growing almost magically. The *Daily Princetonian*[1] published an article on the "Unprecedented Material Growth of the University"—and spoke of the Palmer Physical Laboratory, the Guyot Biological Laboratory, the '77 Dormitory, the Sophomore Commons, the Freshman Dormitory, and other buildings, including the new Graduate College. These were convincing visual evidences of the vitality of Wilson's leadership.

Even more than all this, the outer world had come to understand that remarkable new educational experiments were being conducted by the president of Princeton. The popular view was well expressed in an article published in the *Independent*[2] by Professor Edwin E. Slosson—reprinted with pride in the *Alumni Weekly*, March 10th:

"What I like about Princeton is that it has an ideal of education and is working it out. It is not exactly my ideal, but that does not matter to anybody but me. The remarkable thing is that here is a university that knows what it wants and is trying to get it. Many universities seem to me to be drifting. Some of them are trying in vain not to drift. Some of them are bragging about the speed they are making, when they are really being borne along by the current of affairs and not keeping up with it at that. But Princeton is steering a pretty straight course toward a port of its own choice. . . ."

The outer world was also greatly impressed by what other

[1]September 26, 1908.

[2]March 4, 1909.

educators said of Princeton. President Lowell of Harvard spoke of Wilson at Commencement, 1909:

"Your President is one of the men who have grappled with the problem as it exists to-day, the problem of the college, of the undergraduate department. He has had the courage to say what he thought of it; he has been ready to see that after all the college itself to some extent exists for intellectual purposes. He has already begun solutions which are an example and an encouragement to every college in the United States. Your preceptorial system is universally lauded everywhere I go; it is unquestionably an advance."[1]

Charles Francis Adams, who attended the Princeton Commencement exercises in 1909, wrote to Wilson:

"You have gone further than any other man in the direction which in my judgment is correct; that is, of the smaller college and of the immediate contact of the more mature with the less mature mind,—or, rather, the mind in the formative period. As to discipline, I myself consider it an essential part of all training, whether intellectual or physical."[2]

All of this naturally added to the satisfaction of Princeton men themselves. They felt that this extraordinary leader, however they might be alarmed by his meteoric course, his tendency to "lead too fast and too far," was bringing Princeton into the foremost ranks among universities, and moreover that he was strangely and unaccountably succeeding. They were immensely proud of themselves for their originality in reorganizing the curriculum, establishing the preceptorial system, bringing into the faculty some of the greatest scholars of the country. We find the *Daily Princetonian* at Commencement, 1909, glorying in the new life and enthusiasm of the place:

[1]Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, June 16, 1909.

[2]July 3, 1909.

"The recognized change in the intellectual atmosphere here has been more marked than any other, thanks to the Preceptorial System. This is the first class to enjoy four years of this system, and no one is more eager to perpetuate it than are these men. Competent judges are agreed that the intellectual standards are higher here than they have ever been before, and all are anxious to keep them high. The enthusiasm which these men have shown and still show for this method of education, old yet new, should be enough to dispel the doubts of any one about the standard being raised too high."

The constituency of the university might disagree with Wilson, even abuse him, but he was "the greatest asset of Princeton."

"I trust that you will not feel obliged to go to Tennessee. Your cold ought to be sufficient excuse, and I trust that you will pardon me for reminding you

"(a) That you are to-day Princeton's best asset,

"(b) That you have no right to reduce the value of that asset by careless handling of yourself,

"(c) That we need you now more than ever. We must clean up the finances this winter and you can be of more benefit to Princeton in the near future by keeping yourself in good health, by getting closer to the work here and by helping us in our financial campaign."[1]

One of the older graduates wrote to Wilson after Commencement in 1909:

"I returned last evening from attendance at the Princeton Commencement and the 25th Reunion of the Class of '84. The impression made upon me by the progress of the university during the past few years is so marked, that I cannot refrain from felicitating you on the great works accomplished during your administration. The academic atmosphere of the place is so far in advance of what it

[1] M. Taylor Pyne to Woodrow Wilson, October 25, 1908.

Lees-McRae Library
Banner Elk, N. C.

used to be, and is proceeding by such leaps and bounds, that I feel a sense of obligation. . . ."[1]

It was not only in connection with the university that his power and prestige were growing. He was beginning to take hold as never before upon the entire nation. The kind of man that he was, the principles he stood for, were becoming clearer. He continued his addresses upon the most difficult and important problems that confronted the country, and everywhere he went he made a vivid, even unforgettable impression. On March 4th, President Taft was inaugurated, and the issues of the tariff, the trusts, corruption in politics, became even sharper than they had been in Roosevelt's time. Wilson gave the impression of candour and fearlessness in such addresses as that in St. Louis on "Civic Problems." At Commencement, in 1909, his address on the burning problem of labour "appeared to be sufficiently indiscreet to eliminate him from consideration as a candidate for anything. He had said in his speech that labour frequently scaled down its product to a minimum and gave as little as possible for wages. It was, of course, an abstract statement but enough to scare the politicians."[2]

Nevertheless, George Harvey remarked in *Harper's Weekly:*

"We now expect to see Woodrow Wilson elected Governor of the State of New Jersey in 1910 and nominated for President in 1912 upon a platform demanding tariff revision downward."[3]

Whatever might be Wilson's own discouragements, his own sense of defeat, whatever the bitterness of the fight he was in, he grew steadily in power. The statesman was in the making.

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[1]Job E. Hedges to Woodrow Wilson, June 15, 1909.

[2]David Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson*, p. 37.

[3]May 15, 1909.

II. THE PROBLEM OF A MILLION DOLLARS

Vacations were imperative in Wilson's life. They were imperative not alone for the restoration of a frail body, often overwrought; they were times of clarification of mind, rectification of spirit. Though concerned with affairs, Wilson was essentially a man of thought. And thought demands retirement and quietude. It is with difficulty that many Americans comprehend such a type, particularly in public life. To men whose god is action, a thinker seems to be doing nothing; and they are likely to feel affronted if they are not allowed to fill the apparent vacancies in his employment by shaking his hand. Roosevelt was their man!

Vacations with Wilson were never vacuous summers in popular resorts; they were far from that implication of emptiness which inheres in the root significance of the word. He loved retired places where there were simplicity in living, natural beauty, and quiet friendships—where he could think harder than ever. The lake country in England, Rydal and Grasmere and Ambleside, was nearer his heart than any other place. He liked comfortable, slow-going steamers with a group of interesting and "conversible" fellow passengers. He was fond of tramping and riding his bicycle—much alone.

In America he enjoyed the wilderness of the Muskoka Lake country in Canada, or the Adirondacks "twenty-four miles from the railway," or the Virginia mountains. Even after he became President, he sought retirement—an impossible retirement—during his vacations.

He loved particularly the town and the quiet countryside of Old Lyme in Connecticut. Here were stately trees to shade the broad roads, and homes that bore themselves with the dignity of gracious living. An artist colony, sensitive to the charm of New England at its best, had long

made the town a place of summer retirement. Wilson's friend Professor Vreeland had first lured him to Old Lyme, and he returned year after year, finally expressing his attachment by considering the purchase of a permanent summer home.

Mrs. Wilson delighted in the artistic associations of the old town, in the opportunities given her to pursue her own avocation as a painter. Wilson himself worked during the forenoons and in the afternoons loved to tramp about the country or play golf in the "sheep pasture course" on the Vreeland farm.

"He was a perfectly delightful playmate, always full of stories and humour. Golf was rather an excuse for social enjoyment than an aim in itself. Frequently he would become so deeply absorbed in some discussion that he would forget the game and have the discussion out."[1]

In the long evenings, the family read together. A friend recalls a joyous occasion when Wilson and his daughter "Nell"[2] matched each other with the *Bab Ballads*.

It was to Old Lyme that Wilson retired in the summer of 1909, heavily burdened with the problems of Princeton. He had faced defeat on his programme for social coördination; he was now threatened with still another discomfiture. The Procter gift of $500,000 for the graduate college, with the encouragement it gave to the forces in the university which he considered decentralizing, had tipped the scales against him. Everyone wanted the money, few seemed to care how it was used. He had expressed his own reaction quite frankly in an address given just before he left Princeton:

"A danger surrounding our modern education is the danger of wealth. . . . So far as the colleges go, the sideshows have swallowed up the circus, and we don't know

[1]Professor W. U. Vreeland to the author.

[2]Eleanor, Mrs. McAdoo.

what is going on in the main tent: and I don't know that I want to continue as ringmaster under those conditions. There are more honest occupations than teaching if you can't teach."[1]

He was not yet ready to stop fighting, but it is plain that his doubt as to whether he could continue as "ringmaster" was increasing.

"I don't want you to think I contemplate going out of the business. I shall not, until I have made as many of my fellow countrymen uncomfortable as possible."[2]

Wilson saw with perfect clarity what was happening. West and his supporters would not have succeeded in reopening the question of location of the graduate college, which was the symbol, never the main point in the controversy, if it had not been for Procter's offer. Even Pyne held it a closed question as late as March, 1909. It was anything to get the money! There was little or no discussion of what Wilson considered the fundamentals of educational policy or university administration. What would be the possible effect of having graduate students living a mile away from the laboratories, library, and lecture rooms? Was close contact between older and younger students outside of academic buildings desirable? Would a removal of graduate headquarters to a distant point result in a further decentralization of university administration? These were the real questions, the ones that counted most, yet they were relegated to a secondary place —discussed only casually.

There was another element, the personal element in the problem—West himself. Wilson had long recognized this, and had felt and written that there could be no real solution as long as West remained.

It was his conviction, then and always later, that to win

[1]Address at St. Paul's School, June 3, 1909.

[2]*Ibid.*

against a man, while it might achieve a temporary victory, never produced permanent results—never really proved anything.[1] The only true progress consisted in convincing your following of the validity of the general principles for which you stood. It was much the slower and thornier way, but it was lasting.

We have evidence of how, there in the quiet of the New England countryside, Wilson turned all these things over in his mind. He made his decision not to be drawn into personal controversy, if he could avoid it, but to carry forward with every resource of mind and heart his effort to convince the Princeton following, as well as the American public, by the sheer eloquence and force of his reasoning. He *knew* that he was right, knew it as only a man of his power of concentrated conviction could know it. If only he could get his principles before the people!

Accordingly, he began to work out a number of articles and addresses designed to reach as large a public as possible. One article, called "The Ideal University," was for the *Delineator*.[2] The other, written for *Scribner's Magazine*, of which his old friend Bridges was editor, asked the fundamental question, "What is a College For?"[3] There is evidence of the intense toil he gave during those summer days to the restatement of his conception of higher education, the organization and purpose of the university, the relation of the college, the graduate school, and the professional schools to one another, and the principal functions of each. They were written out in shorthand, read aloud to Mrs. Wilson, transcribed—one of them twice—on his own typewriter. They are remarkable productions and should be read entire for the interpretation they give

[1] His unwillingness in the great years of the Presidency to let personal opposition sway him was one of his notable characteristics. He kept men in his official family at Washington and stood by them, to his own disadvantage.

[2] Published November, 1909.

[3] *Ibid.*

of the mind and the spirit of the man.[1] The very style, direct and simple, with sentences that strike like blows, reflects his intense seriousness. The decorative quotations, the sparkling epigrams and metaphors that marked or marred his earlier writings, are wholly wanting here. These essays have the power, if not the elevation and distinction, of the great addresses of the Presidency. His whole purpose was to convince by the sheer vitality of his appeal.

"What should a lad go to college for,—for work, for the realization of a definite aim, for discipline and a severe training of his faculties, or for relaxation, for the release and exercise of his social powers, for the broadening effects of life in a sort of miniature world in which study is only one among many interests?"[2]

"There is an ideal at the heart of everything American, and the ideal at heart of the American university is intellectual training, the awakening of the whole man. . . .

"The common discipline should come from very hard work, from the inexorable requirement that every student should perform every task set him, whether general or special, whether of his own choice or exacted by the general scheme of study prescribed for all, with care and thoroughness. The spirit of work should pervade the place, honest, diligent, painstaking work."[3]

In both articles one finds reflected the problems which were uppermost in Wilson's Princeton struggles—the institution of a system which would bring social and intellectual life together, a fraternity between master and pupil, and the tying together in intimate relationship of all the parts of the university, graduate and undergraduate.

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[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. II, pp. 147–159 and 160–177.

[2] "What is a College For?"

[3] "The Ideal University."

During the same "summer of clarification," we find him also thinking hard upon the great national and political problems of the day and working out with the same laborious care a restatement of his own views on such issues as the tariff and the trusts. The results of his thinking appeared later in an article in the *North American Review* for October, 1909, "The Tariff Make-Believe," and in an important address, January 17, 1910, before the Bankers' Association in New York.

It had been an arduous summer, but Wilson returned full of new vigour. He would go through with the fight!

Few men in any age are serious. No one who watches the procession of human affairs can doubt this. There is vast talk about convictions, ideals, principles, but to invest life in them, as Wilson did, is rare. When a really serious man appears, people are disturbed by his mysterious power, do not comprehend the sources of it. "The reason why we do not believe in admirable souls is because they are not in our experience."[1]

Reference has already been made to the fact that Wilson was often far more self-revealing, even confidential, in his public addresses than in his personal contacts. It was for this reason, of course, that masses of people understood him better than individuals. After a critical experience, involving deep thought, and a "new orientation of spirit," we confidently expect to find him laying bare his very soul in some public address—somewhat veiled, indeed, in generalities, but clear to one who understands.

So it was in this case. In an address that fall before the McCormick Theological Seminary of Chicago, he set forth what may be called a personal creed—a creed, moreover, that related itself closely to the struggle in hand. It expressed his determination to stand for his principles no matter what happened or who was against him.

[1]Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men*, p. 60.

"Every turning point in the history of mankind has been pivoted upon the choice of an individual, when some spirit that would not be dominated stood stiff in its independence and said: 'I go this way. Let any man go another way who pleases.' . . .

"Men have caught the gregarious habit of conscience as well as of mind, and you will find that nothing heartens an audience in a modern age more than to hear an individual, whether he has anything new to say or not, get up and say something that he really means, singly and by himself, without the least care whether anybody else thinks it and means it or not."[1]

But he went on to explain this determination to be an "indomitable individual," which he considered the core of Christianity, in its relationship to practical affairs—words that illuminate his whole career as by a flash of light. Here he puts his finger on his own personal qualities, limitations, problems, as a leader.

"I have often preached in my political utterances the doctrine of expediency, and I am an unabashed disciple of that doctrine. What I mean to say is, you cannot carry the world forward as fast as a few select individuals think. The individuals who have the vigour to lead must content themselves with a slackened pace and go only so fast as they can be followed. They must not be impracticable. They must not be impossible. They must not insist upon getting at once what they know they cannot get. But that is not inconsistent with their telling the world in very plain terms whither it is bound and what the ultimate and complete truth of the matter, as it seems to them, is. You cannot make any progress unless you know whither you are bound. The question is not one of pace. That is a matter of expediency, not of direction; that is not a matter of principle.

[1]November 2, 1909. *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. II, pp. 181, 184.

"Where the individual should be indomitable is in the choice of direction, saying: 'I will not bow down to the golden calf of fashion. I will not bow down to the weak habit of pursuing everything that is popular, everything that belongs to the society to which I belong. I will insist on telling that society, if I think it so, that in certain fundamental principles it is wrong; but I won't be fool enough to insist that it adopt my programme at once for putting it right.' What I do insist upon is, speaking the full truth to it and never letting it forget the truth; speaking the truth again and again and again with every variation of the theme, until men will wake some morning and the theme will sound familiar, and they will say, 'Well, after all, is it not so?' That is what I mean by the indomitable individual. Not the defiant individual, not the impractical individual, but the individual who does try, and cannot be shamed, and cannot be silenced; who tries to observe the fair manner of just speech but who will not hold his tongue."[1]

While he was talking in this address to preachers, he was nevertheless laying bare the core of his own spirit. "I go this way. Let any man go another way who pleases." "I will not bow down to the golden calf." Yet, "I won't be a fool."

He will be the "indomitable individual" who "cannot be silenced," "who tries to observe the fair manner of just speech, but will not hold his tongue."

Here we have the man himself. That his determination was no "mere talk" appeared plain enough when he came to action in the fall of 1909. It is not necessary to go into all of the details of the struggle that followed. Wilson met Procter in New York[2] and did his best to win him over—to no avail. He was hopeful that out of the situation,

[1] *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. II, pp. 184–185.

[2] October 20th.

difficult as it was, "we may recover . . . the real government of the University."[1] The faculty committee on the graduate school worked hard on a report on the site question and split into two factions and made two reports, the majority consisting of Dean Fine and Professors Conklin, Daniels, and Capps, supporting Wilson's contention that the graduate college must be knit into the university life: and the minority report, signed by West and Hibben, declaring for the off-campus location.

The majority report met the issues frankly, squarely, and forcefully, showing the undesirability of a distant location both from the standpoint of "unity of University administration with all its implications of unity of educational ideals" and from that of effective student work.

The minority report was confined to a rebuttal of the majority's views on the effects of a distant site on the life and scholarship of graduate students. "The selection of a site for the Graduate College should not be determined solely or even mainly by theoretical or conjectural considerations," West and Hibben declared, "but in the light of the best available experience." The experience which they relied upon was that gained at Merwick. They ignored altogether the contention of the majority that "The untoward effects of the isolation of particular schools has been witnessed at Columbia, at Pennsylvania, at Johns Hopkins, and elsewhere; and early mistakes in location have been remedied, where possible, at great expense."

Even more striking was the complete failure of the minority to attempt to refute the vital argument regarding the desirability of a central location for the preservation of unity in administration.[2]

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Edward W. Sheldon, October 19, 1909.

[2]These reports, which sum up excellently the views of the men most intimately connected with the work of the graduate school, may be read in full in the Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, February 16, 1910.

The whole subject, including the reports of the faculty committee, was thoroughly threshed out in a trustees' meeting, October 21st. Mr. Pyne offered a brief but extremely direct and conclusive resolution which not only overrode the majority report of the faculty committee, but Wilson's own policies as president of the university.

"Resolved, That the very generous offer of Mr. Procter be accepted. . . ."

Hot discussion followed. Efforts were made to modify or limit the resolution, in deference to Wilson's views, but it was finally voted to accept the gift provided the legal right to use Mrs. Swann's money for a building on the golf links was established. Wilson well knew, however, that the majority of the Board was determined to take the money with or without conditions.[1] As Dr. Jacobus wrote afterward:

". . . I saw how impossible it was to impress some of the men, from whom as educators one would have expected a fine appreciation of the University's ideals, with anything except the money question."[2]

Some of the clergymen on the Board were among those most eager to accept the money without asking any questions.

"It was interesting to note the attitude of the clergy t'other day. If they, after confessing they know nothing of the merits of the case, succumb at once to the bribe of a dubious $500,000—query—what would they do if $2,000,000 for your social reorganization was dangled in their faces."[3]

It may be imagined how such a defeat would affect a

[1]It should be stated that Mr. Procter intended that not more than $200,000 of his gift be used to erect a dining hall in memory of his father. The rest should be set aside for professorships and scholarships. To such a disposition of the funds Wilson had no objection.

[2]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, October 28, 1909.

[3]Cleveland H. Dodge to Woodrow Wilson, October 27, 1909.

man like Wilson, of powerful convictions and sensitive nature. He felt that the government of the university had been taken entirely out of his hands. Nor could he have been blamed for reflecting bitterly on the ease with which money was obtained to encourage what he considered the forces of exclusiveness and decentralization in the university, and how impossible he had found it to secure gifts for stimulating democratic relationships and vital intellectual interests.

There remained indeed one ray of hope—the legality of the use of the Swann bequest for a building off the campus—later to be swept away.[1]

It was at this time that some of Wilson's best friends urged him to make clear the personal element in the struggle. They felt that the site was not the main issue; that the main issue was one of university ideals, essential educational principles; and that Dean West was himself an element in the problem.

"This issue is not as to the site of the College *qua* site, but as to the site of that College as an expression of West's idea as to how that College is to be run and an opportunity for him to develop it along the lines of his idea."[2]

"Wilson's serious mistake in the Graduate College controversy," says Mr. H. B. Thompson, "was that he permitted his opponents to make the site of the Graduate College the main issue; Wilson himself, you will see, made

[1]When Mrs. Swann left her money to the university, she provided that the graduate college be erected "upon the grounds of the said university." It was the view of Chancellor Magie, an able lawyer and a trustee, that the money could not either legally or morally be used elsewhere than upon the grounds of the university as they were when she made her will. Also he contended that since the golf links was not contiguous to the "lands surrounding the buildings of the university where the work was being carried on," it would not be legal to use the money for a building there. After her will was drawn, the golf links land was purchased by the university. Nine lawyers employed by Mr. Pyne then decided that it was a part of the grounds of the university and that it would be legal to expend Mrs. Swann's money for a building there. The executors of the will agreed with the lawyers. Wilson always thought that it was a legal dodging of the moral obligation imposed by the will.

[2]Dr. M. W. Jacobus to Woodrow Wilson, January 6, 1910.

this most important. While it was important, it was distinctly unimportant in connection with the real issue, which was Dean West's running the Graduate College as a Dictator. West's proposition was that he should run the Graduate College with himself as Dean. He asked for a separate series of officers—Registrar, Bursar, etc. This request was refused, after consideration by a Committee of the Trustees. He proposed to control the staff appointments, the Fellowship appointments, and the policies of the Graduate College, and to carry out this programme Mr. Procter's gift could have been made available. This was the real issue, and Jacobus, McCormick, and I, over and over again, tried to induce the President to fight it out on those lines and ignore the site. . . . If he had been willing to shift the issue to the main point, he would have won hands down."[1]

But Wilson, as we have said, not only hated to make a personal issue, though strongly tempted at this time to do it, but he doubted the permanent value of it. It is an ever-recurrent problem in great leadership. Shall a man keep his struggle on the high plane of great principles: or, to win a momentary battle, shall he enter into a personal contest?

In fact, he did everything possible to avoid an open quarrel with West:

"I return the letter from West. I should like, if possible, to avoid saying what I would have to say in Faculty if West carried out his present plan in the consideration of the matter of Teaching Fellows. I would be very much obliged to you, therefore, if you would be kind enough to let him know in some way that the method he is using is entirely illegal. This might save us from an embarrassing incident. The letter, by the way, fills me with amazement."[2]

[1]H. B. Thompson, a member of the Board of Trustees, then and since, to the author.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to Professor Winthrop M. Daniels, December 14, 1909.

There is evidence that at this time he considered his own resignation as a solution of the problem. He need not have remained. His own prestige in the country was such that he could have found a place in public life at any time. And there were again glittering offers from other universities. Pierce Butler,[1] Regent of the University of Minnesota, visited Princeton.

"In October of 1909, acting as Regent of the University of Minnesota, I called on Woodrow Wilson, then President of Princeton, to ascertain whether he would favourably consider an offer of the presidency of the University of Minnesota to succeed Dr. Cyrus Northrup, who desired to resign. I had a very interesting conference with him. He took the matter under consideration, and some correspondence followed. Later he asked for a conference with representatives of the Board of Regents, and later—early in 1910—met three members—as I remember, Governor A. O. Eberhart, Thomas Wilson, and B. F. Nelson. Shortly after that conference, he let it be known that he would not accept the position offered."[2]

Wilson loved Princeton too much, considered the fight too serious, to give it up until he had exhausted every resource. He now tried various methods of compromise, proposing at one time—and too hastily!—the scheme of using the Swann bequest for a graduate quadrangle on the campus as planned and the Procter gift for a separate building on the golf links. He took up this plan, after consulting Pyne, with Procter himself. As he wrote to Pyne, December 21st:

"MY DEAR MOMO:—

"I realize very keenly the awkwardness of asking Mr. Procter to change the plans he has had in mind, but I feel

[1] Now Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

[2] The Honourable Pierce Butler to the author.

at the same time that we have come to a point where it is absolutely necessary that some arrangement should be made which will render it possible for me to exercise my authority as President in some satisfactory and efficient way and to arrange the organization of the University under me in such a manner that I can conscientiously be responsible for it."

But the West group, now confident of winning, insisted that Mrs. Swann's bequest, as well as a designated portion of Procter's gift and other funds pledged, be used for a graduate college on the golf links.

It was the last straw. He felt that he had done everything possible and that the only course left open was his resignation. On December 22, 1909, on his return from his talk with Procter, he sat down in the Jersey City station and pencilled the following note to Pyne:

"I spent an hour and ten minutes with Mr. Procter this afternoon. He is unwilling to adjust the terms of his offer to my suggestion.

"The acceptance of this gift has taken the guidance of the University out of my hands entirely,—and I seem to have come to the end."

It was a note calculated to startle the trustees and, as Pyne well knew, the entire college world. Wilson was now a public character with no inconsiderable prestige. The controversy up to that time had been practically under cover: it was almost unknown outside of a portion of the Princeton constituency. The opposition, indeed, never supposed that Wilson would carry the struggle to the extraordinary point of suggesting his resignation on the question of accepting a gift of $500,000—which, with other gifts added, would amount to a million dollars. It was unbelievable! It had never been done!

Pyne responded to Wilson's note on December 24th:

MY DEAR WOODROW:—

I trust that what was evidently a hasty note pencilled by you in the Jersey City Station does not represent your well considered conclusions, and that you will withdraw it upon further consideration.

Yours affectionately,
M. TAYLOR PYNE.

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON, LL.D.,
Princeton,
New Jersey.

But Pyne was mistaken. Neither he nor others had got the full measure of their man. Although the note was hastily written in a moment of agitation, Wilson's judgment had not been hastily formed. When the brief message from Pyne came on Christmas Eve, Wilson wrote off a full reply assuring him that, while the note from the station had been written "under deep excitement," there had been no rashness of judgment. He stated his case with frankness, clarity, and conviction. He was unwilling "to be drawn further into the toils." He would not accede to the acceptance of gifts upon terms which took the educational policy of the university out of the hands of the trustees and faculty and permitted it to be determined by those who gave money. "I must ask them [the trustees] to give the University, at whatever cost, its freedom of choice in matters which so nearly touch its life and development."

This letter, not hitherto published, is of such crucial importance that it is here presented in full:

Princeton, New Jersey, 25 December, '09.

MY DEAR MOMO:

Thank you sincerely for your letter of yesterday. I know that it came from your heart, and value it accordingly. You need never fear that I will doubt your affection for me or your entire devotion to the University, whatever happens.

The note I wrote from the Jersey City Station *was* written under deep excitement, but I am sorry to say the judgment it expressed was not hastily formed. It had been taking shape in my mind for some time, and subsequent reflection has only served to confirm it.

The graduate establishment on the Golf Links cannot succeed. The Faculty has never believed in a graduate establishment which did not constitute the geographical and spiritual centre of the University. A Graduate College which lay in every sense at the heart of things was West's first idea, and the modification of his views and purposes has played no small part in depriving him of the confidence of his academic colleagues. He has now lost their confidence completely, and nothing administered by him in accordance with his present ideas can succeed. Indeed, nothing administered by him can now succeed.

When, at my first interview with Mr. Procter, shortly before the October meeting of the Board, I urged upon him the judgment of the Faculty in this all-important matter, and my own clear judgment, in view of all the circumstances, that a Graduate College removed from close neighbourhood to the existing life of the University would be a reversal of our whole policy hitherto and of our whole academic conception and hope, he replied that he was sorry, but that he could not agree with the Faculty and with me, or with the majority of the Trustees' Committee on the Graduate School, and must insist that his gift, if accepted at all, must be used only on the condition that the college provided for by Mrs. Swann's bequest be removed to a distance from the present buildings of the University.

I tried, after the meeting of the Board, in October, to accommodate myself as loyally as possible to its decision, in view of Mr. Procter's wishes, to carry out his ideas rather than those of the leading graduate teachers in the Faculty; but I found it against my conscience to assent to the use of Mrs. Swann's money to build on the Golf Links because of the conviction that the directions of Mrs. Swann's will could not be complied with either in letter or in spirit, (a) because she directs that the buildings shall be placed "upon the grounds" of the University and serious doubts exist as to the legality of placing the building on the Golf Links at all, (b) because she directs that the rooms in the building shall be rented "at the

best prices they will command, to Graduate, Senior and Junior students of the University," (c) in order to produce an income which shall be devoted to the maintenance of so large a number of fellowships as possible.

I therefore proposed to Mr. Procter, on Wednesday last, that his gift and purpose be separated from Mrs. Swann's; that we carry out her will exactly by erecting Thomson College in close association with the present buildings of the University, and that as much as necessary of his proffered gift be devoted to the erection and maintenance on the Golf Links of such an establishment as he favours. This suggestion meets with the hearty concurrence of my colleagues here. I explained to him that there are already graduate students enough to fill one of these establishments, and that by the time our building operations could be completed there would, at our present rate of growth (certain to be accelerated under a proper policy), be enough to fill both; that the judgment of the Faculty was strongly against Professor West's ideas in this matter; and that it was likely that such a compromise would make it possible to try both experiments under favourable auspices. He replied, again, that he was sorry to differ with me, but that he did not approve of dividing the graduate students into two separated groups or of associating graduate life with the undergraduate life of the University. He made it much clearer than before that his views were exactly those of Professor West and Mr. Butler, and that, if his gift was accepted, he would insist upon the use of Mrs. Swann's bequest in connection with it in accordance with those ideas.

You will see, therefore, what I meant when I said in my note from Jersey City that the acceptance of Mr. Procter's gift had taken the guidance of the University out of my hands entirely. Its acceptance by the Board means its acceptance upon the terms prescribed, terms which govern the use of Mrs. Swann's money as well as the use of Mr. Procter's. It has reversed the policy of the Faculty, and the leading conception of my whole administration, in an educational matter of the most fundamental importance. I am not willing to be drawn further into the toils. I cannot accede to the acceptance of gifts upon terms which take the educational policy of the University out of the hands of the Trustees and Faculty and permit it to be determined by those who give money.

I do not wish even to imply a criticism of Mr. Procter. He is in no way at fault. I admire him very much. He has been very generous to the University and in all his dealings with me has acted with the greatest courtesy and kindness. But his attitude means that we must accept his wishes not only with regard to the manner in which his money shall be spent but also with regard to the way in which Mrs. Swann's money shall be expended, and the purposes to which it shall be devoted. I cannot consent, if the gift is deliberately accepted on such terms, to remain responsible for the direction of the affairs of the University or for the development of her educational policy.

This is a very solemn matter, my dear Momo; but the issue is clear. Neither my conscience nor my self-respect will permit me to avoid it. There is only one position I can take. I take it with real grief that it should be necessary; and with unabated affection for yourself. I know that you have been convinced that you were acting for the best interests of the University. But I must now ask the Board to consider it in a new light. I must ask them to give the University, at whatever cost, its freedom of choice in matters which so nearly touch its life and development.

Always,
Affectionately yours,
WOODROW WILSON

P. S. In order to correct any hastiness on my part in a matter of so great importance, I laid it in detail before Chancellor Magie on Thursday last. He said that he thought my judgment in the matter entirely right. He emphasized again, also, his views as to the legality of the proposed use of Mrs. Swann's money.

W. W.

This letter was sent to Pyne on Christmas Day; and two days later Wilson sent copies to other members of the Board of Trustees.

In transmitting the letter to Edward W. Sheldon, who was also his old classmate at Princeton, Wilson wrote:

MY DEAR ED.,

I was greatly disappointed when I learned that you had been in Princeton on Christmas and that I had not seen you. I

wanted to show you in person the enclosed letter and to take counsel with you about it.

I found that I had no choice in conscience but to write it. The situation had become such that to have avoided the issue, feeling as I do, would have been mere weakness. Even had there not been a vital principle involved, vital to the whole morale of the University, the mere duty of keeping our present Faculty and making its work possible would have obliged me to take this stand. I have thought it over long and seriously: the conviction upon which it rests forced itself to the front in spite of every consideration of convenience or expediency, and I must now abide by it.

My affection for you, my trust in your judgment, my knowledge of your sound wisdom in all matters of duty make me hope with all my heart that you will approve.

Affectionately Yours,
WOODROW WILSON

I am also sending copies of the letter to Mr. Jno. A. Stewart, Cyrus McCormick, Dr. Jacobus, Cleve. Dodge, Mr. Garrett, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Jones (to be read also to his brother and to Mr. McIlvaine).

It was the kind of a fighting letter, all guards down, that was not only devastating to Wilson's opponents, but it brought the entire Board of Trustees up standing. It dramatized, as nothing else could have done, the fundamental issues of the struggle.

DEAR WOODROW,

Don't worry about me old man—I am very fit & only worry for your sake.

I am glad that you have at last taken the bull by the horns & forced the issue. I knew it must come & don't see how you could have done anything else. . . .

Your letter will bring us all up standing & clear the air most decidedly & I think you will now sleep better.

Anyhow rest assured that I am with you all the time. . . .

Affly
C. H. DODGE.[1]

[1]December 28, 1909.

Some of the trustees were alarmed at the method even when they approved the matter.

"Your letter to Mr. Pyne,—with a copy of which you favoured me,—states the whole case with accuracy.

"Much as it grieves me I feel bound to say that I adhere to the view I expressed at our interview. If I were in your place I [should] have sought to discover some other course than that you have taken that I might adopt & advise you to adopt, but I have not been able to discover any."[1]

It was on December 28th—Wilson's birthday—that the replies began coming in to him. He was fifty-three years old; and he had flung down the gauge of battle!

Never before had there been such excitement in the grave councils of the Princeton Board of Trustees. A leader leads; and Wilson's friends not only came vigorously to his support, but some of the doubters were brought around. Wilson was worth more to Princeton even than Procter's $500,000!

In a very important letter to Thomas D. Jones on January 1st, Wilson put, with startling clarity, his view of the situation, explained why he had not based his fight, as he had been urged to do, upon the issue of Dean West personally—and came out flat-footedly for the rejection of Procter's money.

". . . if we were to accept Mr. Procter's gift on the terms he prescribes, we should be taking the educational policy of the University out of the hands of the Trustees and Faculty. . . . The Trustees make no reservation at all as to the wisdom of the policy proposed. We now know that Mr. Procter's gift means West's policy. That policy every thinking element in the Board and in the Faculty rejects. We give up our judgment entirely in the most essential matter of all in order to get the money. Even if West were eliminated, we would still be agreeing to do

[1]Chancellor W. J. Magie to Woodrow Wilson, January 3, 1910.

what a majority of the Trustees' Committee, all but a majority of the Board itself, and a very large majority of the Faculty think radically unwise. That is giving up the government of the University for the sake of the money. I am confident that the majority of the Board would decide the policy differently if the gift were out of the way. I think that we should decline the gift because it is not offered for the advancement of a policy of which we approve.

"To put the matter explicitly upon the ground of our disapproval of West and what he stands for, would, it seems to me, be to make it appear a personal matter, which the friends of the University would certainly misinterpret greatly to our discredit. We have the authority to eliminate West at any time. If he is at fault, it would be asked, why not retire him? Why decline the gift to get rid of him, if the gift would be acceptable and advantageous to the University without him? We now know, indeed, that Mr. Procter's gift is made to put West in the saddle, but we cannot make that a matter of public discussion. We can make it public, however, that we do not feel at liberty to accept gifts for purposes of which we disapprove."

In short, he was determined, then and later, to keep the discussion on the highest grounds.

It may be imagined how hot were the conferences, how urgent the letters, between Christmas and the meeting of the Board of Trustees on January 13, 1910. Pyne was the only outstanding member of the Board who was strongly opposed to Wilson, and every effort was made by other trustees—we have much correspondence relating to the matter—to bring him around. In his own way, Pyne was just as sincere, devoted, and interested in Princeton as any one of the trustees. He was a rich man, owned a beautiful home in Princeton, and was intimately familiar with

the life of the university. No alumnus had been more generous than he.

The struggle worried him intensely: he could not think of giving up Procter's half million! He wrote to Wilson, January 10th:

"I *have* worried very much over this matter. I want to meet your wishes and at the same time my views are so strong as to the danger and unwisdom of refusing Procter's gift that I have been torn almost in two. I hope that some solution may be found that will satisfy us all—in part at least."

A meeting of the graduate school committee was held just before the trustees' meeting on January 13th. It was dramatic in the extreme, for Wilson's opponents, now seeing defeat ahead of them, cleverly turned the tables upon him. After Wilson had set forth his position regarding the Procter gift, Pyne presented a letter from Procter accepting the compromise proposal that Wilson had made several weeks before, that the Procter gift be used separately from the Swann bequest, and that his graduate college be built on the golf links. It took Wilson wholly by surprise, and for a moment he was utterly confused and passionately asserted that the matter of site was not essential, that the faculty could "make this school a success anywhere in Mercer County." And then he put the issue plainly and bluntly:

"The whole trouble is that Dean West's ideas and ideals are not the ideas and ideals of Princeton!"

"I was so much taken aback by Mr. Procter's letter and so angered at the evident trick that had been played us, that I did not feel at all sure that I had acted with self-control and propriety on Thursday last, and it reassures me immensely that you should have thought that I bore myself properly."[1]

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Henry B. Thompson, January 17, 1910.

The fact was that Wilson's proposal of two graduate colleges had been put forward merely as a possible compromise in the hope of making Procter see his point of view; but it was undoubtedly a tactical blunder on his part. It was the kind of dickering—a dickering he intensely disliked and should never have attempted—in which his opponents were far cleverer than he. As he wrote his friend, Dr Hiram Woods:

"I had never thought it a proper solution of the matter, but I had suggested it to him only as something that the Trustees might be willing to consider."[1]

After the exciting meeting of the committee, the Board itself met. Procter's new offer was presented by Pyne, and Wilson read aloud a joint communication from the majority members of the faculty committee on the graduate school—Dean Fine, Professors Capps, Conklin, and Daniels. It was a powerful statement of the essential issues at stake:

"We feel impelled to this action because the divergence of opinion between the majority and minority of our Committee proved to be radical, and because if we continue as members of this Committee we may be placed in the embarrassing position of being obliged to coöperate with the minority in carrying out plans to which we, the majority cannot subscribe."[2]

The contentions set forth were vigorous blows at West's entire conception of a graduate school. They questioned the "wisdom of laying emphasis upon the supervision and direction of the life of graduate students," and opposed the segregation of graduates and undergraduates and the separation of a certain part of the graduates from their fellows. They believed the best graduate students

[1]March 23, 1910.

[2]"The Proposed Graduate College," pp. 43–44. This statement was drawn by the majority of the faculty committee without consultation with the minority.

would be repelled "by any scheme which lays emphasis upon considerations other than those of scholarship." Furthermore, the good will of the faculties of other universities, upon which the Princeton graduate school must depend, could be obtained only by having it recognized as a place distinguished for its scholarship. "Such a school can be secured only by the abandonment of our present emphasis upon non-essentials." They declared a great graduate school demanded a great graduate faculty, and a strong faculty could not be gotten unless the conditions were of such a character as to attract them. "And we cannot attract strong men by adherence to dilettante ideals."

After reading this biting letter, Wilson spoke on the subject of the graduate school. When he had finished, Dr. Jacobus rose and, in the stillness of the room, moved that Mr. Procter's offer be declined. It was clearly seen by everyone that Wilson's supporters were now in command. He was winning, even against a million dollars! To delay such decisive action, however, a substitute resolution was introduced, and finally passed:

"Resolved, that the whole question involved in Mr. Procter's offer be referred to a Special Committee of Five to be appointed by the President, to report at an adjourned meeting of the Board to be held at eleven o'clock Thursday morning, February 10th."[1]

The president appointed to the committee Dr. Dixon, Mr. Green, Mr. Dodge, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Thomas D. Jones, Chairman.

It was a substantial but hard-won victory for Wilson—one of those victories, however, that leave deep scars.

The so-called Jones Committee began work at once, and, after arduous labours, made a unanimous report, in

[1] "The Proposed Graduate College," p. 49.

which those of the "West party" agreed with those of the "Wilson party." It is a remarkable and clear-headed presentation of the situation, and should be read in full by those interested.[1] Before it could be presented, however, Procter, on February 6th, anticipating the unfavourable conclusions, withdrew his offer entirely.

The report pointed out that it was not merely Dean West's scheme which the trustees were called upon to accept and adhere to, "but this scheme plus removal to a location outside the Central campus with all the train of consequences which that removal would entail. This was a new and important element engrafted by Mr. Procter's offer upon the original scheme. Time modifies all ideals, and time might safely be trusted to shift the emphasis from one side of College life to another; to ameliorate this evil or that evil; but time will not transfer a building from one location to another."

In concluding, the Committee recommended that the Board again express its appreciation to Mr. Procter for his offer and put upon record its regret that he deemed it wise to withdraw it. It was to be hoped that he would be disposed to renew it in the near future, and it was confidently expected that an agreement mutually satisfactory to him and the Board could be reached.

When the trustees met on Thursday, February 10th, in a special session, there was nothing for them to do but to hear the committee's report and vote an adoption of it. The offer had been withdrawn. The report was beyond debate, for it was unanimous; the opposition being silenced by the fact that its representatives, Dr. Dixon and Mr. Green, had approved it.

Mr. Dodge's letter to Wilson on Sunday, February 6th, radiated his relief and delight at Procter's withdrawal of

[1] Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, February 16, 1910.

his offer and the triumph of the president's cause. He realized, however, that the victory was certain to bring a terrific storm of abuse, and hastened to extract a solemn promise from Wilson that he would not withdraw under fire.

It would be difficult to exaggerate Wilson's satisfaction.

7 February, 1910.

DEAR CLEVE:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your letter. It went to the right place, and has sent my barometer up as high as it can go! My heart is very warm with it indeed.

At last we are free to govern the University as our judgments and consciences dictate! I have an unspeakable sense of relief. I most cheerfully give you the solemn promise you ask me to give: that I will not allow anything that is said to unseat me. I know what is coming; but nothing can put me from the presidency now except some adverse *action* of the Board itself. The heavier the storm, the tighter I will sit. The shackles are off now and I can speak when and as I please, when your report is once made and published.

I agree with you that Mr. Jones has proved himself a wonderful guide and leader in this difficult business. We owe him a great debt of gratitude.

This is not dictated. It is written on my own type-writer.

With deep gratitude and affection,

Faithfully,

WOODROW WILSON

But the storm had not yet fully broken. The public, let alone the Princeton constituency, had not awakened to the extraordinary and unprecedented action of a university in refusing a million dollars in gifts. It was inconceivable! Yet it had been done.

On February 14th, Wilson, utterly worn out with the strain of the battle, both physical and emotional, sailed for Bermuda for a short rest. The cyclone—and it was not less

than that—swept through the world of Princeton while he was gone.

III. REVOLT

It would be difficult to overemphasize the fury of the controversy which followed the withdrawal of Procter's gift. The incident was one of those rare precipitants in human affairs which clarify the life of the times, make plain the essential forces of society. If one wished to make an intensive study of the American scene in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, he could find no community more articulate than that of Princeton. Everything was there, dramatized in little. The theme was ancient: a nation growing rich and beginning to abandon its democratic ideals is startled and confused when a man of vision and power challenges the new gods and makes the situation clear by telling the truth about it.

It was a controversy that could not have been kept out of the public press. When problems of "privilege" and "money power" were in men's minds, the struggle of a university over the acceptance of a gift of $500,000 furnished the specific example which is the very essence of news. It began spilling over into the New York newspapers in various distorted and exaggerated reports in January before the fight had reached a climax—when, indeed, little or nothing was known about it outside the Princeton circle. A well-informed editorial entitled "Princeton," written by H. B. Brougham for the New York *Times*, February 3, 1910, three days before Procter withdrew his gift, set the world afire. It was a stinging rebuke to the forces of wealth which through gifts were interfering with the development of sound academic work and fostering "mutually exclusive social cliques, stolid groups of wealth and fashion, devoted to non-essentials and the smatterings of culture."

It started reverberations that could be heard across the country in scores of articles and editorials, it cut the anti-Wilson faction of the Princeton constituency to the quick. They were enraged. At the Princeton Club in New York, the headquarters of the anti-Wilson element, there was much loose talk of his forced retirement if he did not repudiate the editorial.[1] Pyne made a public reply, alleging misstatements and denying the aspersions on the scholastic and social aspects of the graduate college project and on Princeton itself.[2] On February 7th, he reviewed the Procter case from his own point of view.[3]

Various alumni rushed into the discussion with signed or anonymous letters. The Princeton *Alumni Weekly* was filled every week with letters, charges and counter charges —most of them displaying far more heat than light.

While there was fuming and roaring over the loss of the gift and the publicity in the newspapers, there was a great body of Princeton men and a greater mass of the public at large who stood firmly with the president. There came many letters in the trying days of February and later, which must have warmed the president's heart and

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[1]New York *Herald*, February 10, 1910.

[2]R. E. Annin, *Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 392–393.

[3]New York *Sun*, February 8, 1910.

Wilson was bitterly attacked for inspiring, indeed, seeking, the publication of the *Times* editorial. The actual facts are given in a letter written by H. B. Brougham, August 21, 1924:

"During a visit to New Haven in the winter of 1909–1910, wholly without Mr. Wilson's knowledge I obtained the full story of the issues then being drawn at Princeton from some friends among the faculty at Yale. . . . My interest in the man and my admiration for his conduct was so enkindled that on returning to the *Times* Office I wrote an editorial article on the situation at Princeton, strongly siding with Mr. Wilson. This was approved by the editor in chief, the late Charles R. Miller, and was scheduled to appear on the morning of Jan. 31. It would have appeared then, but for my wish to verify at first hand certain of the statements I had made. Being in charge of the editorial page at night, I held out this article and addressed a letter to President Wilson, explaining that the *Times* had the story of the controversy over the Graduate College; that it had decided to publish an article, already in type, on the stand he had taken, and I asked his confirmation of the matters about which the *Times* had learned.

"His reply by return mail confirmed the facts set forth in the article; so, substantially as originally written, it appeared on the 3d of February."

given him courage. The West seems to have backed him strongly, but even in the East there were many Wilson adherents.

Van G. Sutphen, an alumnus, wrote him:

"No one can regret more than I do the loss of half a million dollars to the University. But I am glad to know that there is one thing that mere money cannot buy—Princeton's independence of thought and action."[1]

Old Professor Ormond, in the Mercer Hospital, sent a vigorous message, February 8, 1910:

"Let the heathen rage. Stand fast for the faith. The Truth shall be victorious and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it."

One of the letters Wilson prized was from his old friend, Walter H. Page:

New York, 11 Feb'y, 1910

MY DEAR WILSON:

As little as I know about the details of the controversy, I think I see the larger principle clearly that is involved; and I wish to do myself the pleasure to say that you are eternally right; and the principle is worth standing firm for and fighting for.

Yours heartily,
WALTER H. PAGE.

The situation in the town of Princeton itself was especially hard for the Wilsons to bear.

"I feel as if the whole air about me were poisoned. But it is a great comfort to know that the country at large has grasped the true issue, and that Woodrow stands higher than ever in its estimation. The papers all over the country are writing editorials showing that."[2]

It was a burdened spirit that Wilson took with him to Bermuda. Like every strong and orderly administrator,

[1]February 14, 1910.

[2]Letter from Ellen Axson Wilson to Miss Florence Hoyt, February 24, 1910.

he hated contention and the disorganization and unrest that go with it. Nor did the interest and approval of the country at large, however gratifying, appease him, for they did not bring him any nearer to what he desired with all the strength of his determined spirit—and that was the reconstruction of Princeton University along lines of high principle.

In the intimate letters written to his wife while in Bermuda, he disclosed the bitterness of his soul:

"I did not realize until I got here how hard hit my nerves had been by the happenings of the past month. Almost at once the *days* began to afford me relief, but the nights distressed me. The trouble latent in my mind came out in my dreams. Not till last night did the distress—the struggle all night with college foes, the sessions of hostile trustees, the confused war of argument and insinuation—cease."[1]

But gradually the charm of the place, the quietude, the friendly people—and more than all else, his work in clarifying his mind through the preparation of several articles and addresses—brought restoration. Here as always he turned with confidence to the sympathy and affection of his wife:

"I think I never needed them [her letters] more in my life. I never felt more lonely and isolated, despite the kindness and cordiality of many friends here, old and new."[2]

He can also assure her:

"We have no compromises to look back on, the record of our consciences is clear in this whole trying business. We can be happy, therefore, no matter what may come of it all. It would be rather jolly, after all, to start out on life anew together, to make a new career, would it not? Ex-

[1]February 17, 1910.

[2]February 25, 1910.

perience deepens with us . . . and with experience love, and I thank God with all my heart!"[1]

He gives a glimpse of his life in Bermuda:

"There is really nothing else to tell. I work in the forenoon, and in the afternoon go visiting, in the evening join this group or that. If I were to make a narrative of it all, my letter would read like those Mrs. Peck used to send me from here, at which you used to smile and wonder. . . .

"If you want to know what you have done for me of late, I wish you would read Shakespeare's sonnet which begins 'When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes.'"[2]

Wilson sailed from Bermuda on March 5th and was soon immersed in the turmoil of university affairs. The attack upon him was now concerted and bitter, and it not only related to the rejection of the Procter gift, but struck at his ideas for social reconstruction—and even assailed the preceptorial system which had now become firmly established and was considered the backbone of the "new Princeton." Dr. Henry van Dyke made a fresh attack on Wilson's quad ideas at an alumni meeting in the strongly anti-Wilson camp at Philadelphia. Much of the criticism by alumni and others was founded upon the strangest misrepresentations. Here Wilson's policy, as always afterward in cases of personal attack, was silence:

"I have made it my standard of action recently to make no reply or comment whatever upon the numerous lies and misrepresentations which are current. I think it would be a very great mistake to depart from this policy in any public way whatever or to let it be known that I was departing from it, but of course it is a pleasure and a privilege to answer a letter like yours. . . .

"I could not make any statements which would check the ever changing lies and misrepresentations which are

[1]February 21, 1910.

[2]February 28, 1910.

being uttered. The other side is not in a temper to receive any statement from me. Their attack is personal and not on its merits. I have been absolutely endorsed by those of my colleagues in the Board who are acting as my advisers in my policy of ignoring these various statements and charges. To state the interior of this business would be to discredit a number of men of whom the alumni at present have a high opinion. I think it would do the University more harm than good to do such a thing, because it would add bitterness untold to the controversy. It is much better that I should take the brunt of it than to do that.

"Thank you with all my heart, my dear Hiram, for your letter and for all that you are doing to help along in this puzzling and distressing business."[1]

Wilson felt that men who would stop to inquire, men who knew what the real situation was, would support him. One of the amazing things throughout all these bitter struggles was the extraordinary loyalty of Wilson's friends. Nothing could exceed the devotion of such trustees as Dr. M. W. Jacobus, David B. Jones, Thomas D. Jones, Cleveland H. Dodge, Cyrus H. McCormick, E. W. Sheldon, Henry B. Thompson, and others. In the faculty he had the most devoted support.

"You stand for far more in the lives and ideals of the younger men of the faculty than you can know, and we prize in turn your personal interest and friendship."[2]

The sympathy of thoughtful leaders in other universities was also a great comfort to him. President Lowell, in a very friendly and sympathetic note, asked:

"Is there any way in which I can help your cause by saying to any of your Trustees or prominent alumni what I most earnestly believe, that to have you resign would be

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[1]Letter to Dr. Hiram Woods, March 23, 1910.

[2]Professor George M. Priest to Woodrow Wilson, March 6, 1910.

a catastrophe for Princeton, and a very grave misfortune for the whole cause of American education?"[1]

Wilson wrote in reply:

"The situation here is really very strained. There is a strong element in our Board of Trustees which I may perhaps without offence denominate the 'little Princeton party.' They have not been able to see things in a large way and are very hot against the main ideas of development and reorganization which seem to me essential for the future of the University. I feel sure that the contest can be carried out to its finish without any loss of dignity, and I hope that a great deal can be done to cool the feeling of the alumni, who are now excited by misrepresentation. But the issue is by no means clear."[2]

He wrote a little later to Professor William E. Dodd of the University of Chicago:

"It is delightful to find how much sympathy exists for my somewhat lonely fight here among the men in the faculties of the great universities as well as the small colleges, and I am hoping every day that some other President may come out and take his place beside me. It is a hard fight, a long fight, and a doubtful fight, but I think I shall at least have done the good of precipitating a serious consideration of the matters which seem to me fundamental to the whole life and success of our colleges."[3]

The opposition to Wilson was by no means all talk. The Eastern alumni were largely against him, and they proposed not only to bring all possible pressure upon the Board of Trustees, but to elect new members who would oppose him. Adrian H. Joline, a well-known alumnus of Princeton, class of 1870, and a corporation lawyer of great reputation in New York, became their candidate.

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[1]March 21, 1910.

[2]March 23, 1910.

[3]May 4, 1910.

"At present the whole matter seems to me to turn upon the verdict of the alumni in the choice of an Alumni Trustee. I am told everywhere that Mr. Joline (as was indeed evident in the circumstances) is proposed distinctly as an anti-administration candidate, while Mr. Barr is, I believe, committed to no party. I am happy to say that I do not know his opinions on pending university questions. My feeling is that the election of Mr. Joline would be a distinct verdict on the part of the majority of the alumni against the present administration, and I should be very much in doubt in that case as to what my own proper course was. The heats of the present controversy have so obscured all real issues that the danger of such a decision seems very real. I think that if in any proper way interest could be made in favour of Mr. Barr and his election to the Board secured, it would go far towards tiding us over the present time of passion."[1]

Wilson had another resource to which he turned many times in his life. This was an "appeal to the country," in accordance with his deep-seated convictions regarding "responsible leadership." He had made up his mind while in Bermuda to carry the fight to the alumni themselves in every part of the country. He would expound his principles of education and public service; he would not attack individuals, or answer personal attacks, he would win on the merits of the case.

On March 11th, only a few days after his return, he began a remarkable speaking tour, comparable to the "swing-around" of a political campaign. He addressed alumni audiences in the East at Baltimore, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, and then invaded the West, appearing before a notable and influential gathering in St. Louis. These addresses, reported in the Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, reached the great body of his constituency. Early in April,

[1]Woodrow Wilson to I. H. Lionberger, March 16, 1910.

he invaded the enemy's country—New York—exactly as a presidential candidate might do. What training, all this, for the days that were to come! Well might Wilson say afterward, as he often did, that the professional politicians had little to teach him.

At all of these meetings, Wilson handled himself with consummate skill. What he wanted was no temporary victory over any man or any faction, but a change of attitude that would permit him to reconstruct the life of Princeton University. He wrote to John D. Davis, a trustee and leader in the arrangements for the St. Louis meeting, that he was ready to do his utmost "to be discreet not only, but to meet the situation with openness of mind and a genuine desire to find some proper settlement of a very complicated matter." He added, however, "There are certain principles which I feel I cannot yield, but it is thoroughly worth considering every possible means of accommodation."[1]

Wilson's address at St. Louis was a triumph. Procter himself was there. Wilson wrote to Dr. Jacobus upon his return:

April 2nd, 1910.

MY DEAR DR. JACOBUS:—

My little campaign is over. I have spoken at Baltimore, Brooklyn, Jersey City, and St. Louis, and have tried in the four speeches pieced together to make as complete an impersonal statement of our case as was possible. Each of these meetings was thoroughly encouraging. The net result of them all is that I think the significance of Mr. Joline's candidacy is fully understood. Barr will poll as full a vote as it is possible for anyone to poll who is opposed by so thoroughly organized a body as the alumni in and about New York. Evidence accumulates that Mr. Joline is not only desired as a member of the Board who will oppose the policies of the administration, but as the organizing leader of the party in the Board which is opposed to our policies. This has been distinctly avowed on more than one occasion by his supporters.

[1]March 18, 1910.

The most enthusiastic, and therefore the most encouraging, of the meetings I have attended was the one at St. Louis. Mr. Procter behaved very well indeed, but committed himself to absolutely nothing. What was useful was that he should see the enthusiasm of the alumni who attended the meeting and their eager desire to support the administration. I think it very likely, from every indication, that his offer will be renewed, but only in a form which will "dish" us in some adroit way.

It will be very delightful to see you again as soon as possible and talk about what cannot be written in a letter without spinning it out to many trivial details.

With warmest regard,
Always faithfully yours,
WOODROW WILSON

The REV. DR. M. W. JACOBUS.

There remained New York, where the alumni were still "fighting mad." He was to meet them at a great meeting on April 7th.

". . . I shall of course give them a very explicit and direct exposition and they will at any rate be without excuse if they do not comprehend the issues, stripped of all personalities."[1]

It was a dramatic occasion.

"The large dining rooms of the club were converted into an assembly hall for the occasion, with a rostrum at one end. Every seat was taken, and the crowd overflowed into adjoining rooms, about three hundred hearing the address."[2]

"The tension that evening was indescribable. Never in his later career did Woodrow Wilson face an audience more hostile to him. The perfunctory cheers at the opening of the meeting were not as usual for 'Wilson' but for 'the President of Princeton'—the irony of which did not escape his notice."[3]

[1] Woodrow Wilson to Dr. M. W. Jacobus, April 5, 1910.

[2] Princeton *Alumni Weekly*, April 13, 1910.

[3] David Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson*, p. 29. Lawrence was an eye-witness.

Like the fighter he was, Wilson struck straight at the problem in hand, and yet with humour—and irony:

"Mr. Phillips and gentlemen: It occurred to me as Mr. Phillips was making the necessary statement, that it might be susceptible of a slight misunderstanding. I assure you I do not intend to say anything scandalous. [Laughter.] It is a very great pleasure for me to be able to speak to the Princeton Club, and it is particularly delightful to come to you when you are interested in a purely educational matter.

"I know of course, what your present inquiries,—the question lying in the back of your heads—is reducible to. You say it is all very well and very interesting to talk about educational ideals, but it is bad business to refuse half a million dollars."

With such a challenging introduction it may be imagined what attention Wilson had for his address. He centred every effort upon the task of making his auditors recognize the fundamentals of the problem, "what the business of a university means."

It was in every way a powerful and impressive address.

"The past age was dominated by one idea embodied . . . in the mind and thought of one of the greatest men who has appeared in the field of American education—I mean President Eliot of Harvard. I suppose that no man has more fully earned the reputation of being the most useful citizen of the country than he."

But Eliot's task, he went on to say, was one of liberation:

"He battered down the closed doors of the university world. He fought until he had destroyed all the established prejudices of academic men. He insisted that there was no body of learning, which by reason of traditional prejudices, had precedence over any other body of learning."

But the time came for a new synthesis, a new coördination:

"It was just about at that period, just when all the academic world was waiting for somebody to take the initiative that Princeton had the audacity to step forward and take it."

He then called attention to the remarkable things that had been done at Princeton, the reorganization of the curriculum, the introduction of the preceptorial system, the improvement of the faculty. He refrained, judiciously, from referring to his plans for carrying the new movement a further step forward through the social coördination of the university, but it was, nevertheless, an essential part of his programme, as his auditors well knew—and feared.

He then struck straight at the problem of the graduate college as the important element of the "new Princeton." The undergraduate work had made great advances in recent years. Why had the graduate school lagged behind? He indicated, as he had done earlier, that dictatorial control and the failure to admit the faculty to a share in the conduct of the graduate department had been largely responsible for its failure to grow. Without mentioning West, he flung out a vigorous denunciation of his plans, and questioned Procter's gift as limiting the freedom of control by the constituted authorities.

"A university does not consist of money. A university does not consist of buildings or of apparatus. A university consists of students and teachers. But it would be vastly better for them, if you could enlist the full enthusiasm of thought and mind and purpose, to camp in the open than to take the material apparatus first at the risk of not getting the spiritual material afterwards."

Wilson talked for nearly an hour; he was not interrupted by applause. At the end, a few friends cheered him;

but he made few converts. Nothing that he could have said at that time would much have altered the situation.

It was with many of these men exactly as it was with one of the trustees of whom Dr. Jacobus wrote to Wilson on April 5th:

". . . his tendency is to side with dollars rather than ideas, and I fear his general inability quickly to see the latter will make it all the harder in this case to close his eyes to the former."

Some of Wilson's friends at this time intimated that Procter might renew his gift, and urged him to compromise; but Wilson was becoming thoroughly convinced that unless the conditions were changed he could not remain:

"When I said to you the other day that I thought we would have to accept a renewed offer from Mr. Procter if made with no condition but that of the site I meant that I would have nothing to say, must stand aside, and quietly withdraw."[1]

The next great crisis in the struggle took place in the Board meeting of April 14th. Both sides had had conferences beforehand and came prepared. The anti-Wilson group was again in control. First a motion to refer the question of organization and administration of the graduate school to a committee of the faculty was defeated. Second, a new plan, the purpose of which was to get Procter to renew his gift, was strongly supported. In both cases the Wilson supporters felt themselves defeated. The refusal of the Pyne majority to allow the faculty at this time to express its opinion as to the organization and administration of the graduate school is significant, particularly in view of the contention of Wilson's enemies that his influence in the faculty had very largely diminished. Can it be doubted that the Pyne element would have

[1]Letter to Professor Winthrop M. Daniels, April 5, 1910.

strengthened their own position by a faculty endorsement if they really thought it could be obtained? The president, on the other hand, never doubted that the majority of the teaching staff was whole-heartedly with him, and no one was so anxious as he that a faculty expression should be requested.

Wilson felt great bitterness over the result of this meeting. He could see that he was again losing; that the potency of a million dollars in gifts was too great for him.

Two days later, in an alumni address before the Princeton Club of Pittsburgh, he unloosed his wrath. He attacked in scathing terms the influences which really dominated the universities of America—and the churches and the nation behind them. He struck at the power of money; at the ideals of exclusiveness and privilege fostered by money. Democracy was the real issue, and the stake was far larger than Princeton: it was national.

Unfortunately, we have no verbatim copy of his address; but his notes remain, and also certain parts of the speech, reported in the press.

"I trust I may be thought among the last to blame the churches, yet I feel it my duty to say that they—at least the Protestant churches—are serving the classes and not the masses of the people. They have more regard for the pew rents than for men's souls. They are depressing the level of Christian endeavour.

"It is the same with the universities. We look for the support of the wealthy and neglect our opportunities to serve the people. . . .

"While attending a recent Lincoln celebration I asked myself if Lincoln would have been as serviceable to the people of this country had he been a college man, and I was obliged to say to myself that he would not. The process to which the college man is subjected does not render him serviceable to the country as a whole. It is for this

reason that I have dedicated every power in me to a democratic regeneration.

"The American college must become saturated in the same sympathies as the common people. The colleges of this country must be reconstructed from the top to the bottom. The American people will tolerate nothing that savours of exclusiveness. Their political parties are going to pieces. They are busy with their moral regeneration and they want leaders who can help them accomplish it. Only those leaders who seem able to promise something of a moral advance are able to secure a following. The people are tired of pretense, and I ask you, as Princeton men, to heed what is going on."

Strong words! Words that were blows; words that could no more be kept within the confines of a club in Pittsburgh than any other high explosive. While the newspaper excerpts emphasized the more sensational parts of the address—Wilson himself objected afterward to the reports[1]—they represented truly enough his passionate revolt against money-dominated American society. Indeed, in a talk before the meeting with his old friend Lawrence C. Woods of Pittsburgh,with whom he stayed as a guest, he showed that he understood his position with absolute clarity. A break with Princeton meant not only a serious personal problem, but, more important still, it threatened the fruition of his own aspirations as an educator.

"In taking the position I do," he said, "I am throwing away any chance of carrying out my educational plans.

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[1]As he wrote to Isaac H. Lionberger:

"I hope—and believe—that the men who *heard* my Pittsburgh speech did not misunderstand, but in my deep excitement, I did not stop to think of how it would sound in the newspapers. I should have done so. Without interpretation, what I said about Lincoln is crude and badly reasoned.

"I spoke too soon after a meeting of the Trustees at which the majority vote seemed to me to create an impossible situation; but that is only an explanation of my stupid blunder, not an excuse for it. I shall try to remedy the mistake when I can,—not by way of explanation, but by more just exposition of the matter." (April 28, 1910.)

But what can I do? I must follow what I think is right."[1]

The address caused a tremendous sensation throughout the Princeton following. Certain of Wilson's enemies published it in a pamphlet entitled "That Pittsburgh Speech," and circulated it widely among Princeton alumni. While it sharpened the ire of his critics and increased his opposition, especially in the East, it added, on the other hand, tremendously to the popular interest throughout the country in his struggle. And it attracted newly the support of educational leaders.

"In common with others of the toiling millions, I have received a pamphlet entitled 'That Pittsburgh Speech,' which I judge comes from the enemy; but it gives an opportunity to say briefly that you are fighting the cause of scholarship and education. I live in the midst of a great university, for which I feel a lively loyalty, and which I impartially account the best; but I see at Harvard the same kind of forces as those which you discuss."[2]

Some of Wilson's critics later charged that the speech was a direct bid for political favour. There are always those who are ready to charge duplicity when a man speaks out of the depth of his soul. It was the action of the Board two days before that had stirred his wrath: and what he said was aimed to save Princeton University, which he had served faithfully for twenty years and loved deeply, from the dangers he saw threatening her. He needed no academic controversy to advance his cause. If he could not gain influence by power of well-reasoned convictions, he knew better than anyone else that it was not possible to gain it by personal attacks or by sensational denunciations.

What he had faith in, then and always afterward, was not the political clap-trap that appeals to small minds, but

[1]Edward A. Woods to the author.

[2]Professor Albert Bushnell Hart to Woodrow Wilson, May 12, 1910.

the sheer power of principles, ideals, a "constructive programme." As he said, indeed, in a self-revealing flash at the New York alumni meeting just referred to:

"... nobody could defeat Alexander Hamilton, whether he was in office or not, because he alone had the constructive programme; and they either had to submit to chaos, or follow Hamilton."

Nevertheless, at that very time the political pressure upon him was growing stronger. More and more it seemed to shrewd political judges that he was the "inevitable man."

Henry Eckert Alexander, the energetic editor of the *True American* of Trenton, wrote Wilson, after reading the advance press copy of a speech that Wilson delivered at Elizabeth, New Jersey:

"More and more I am convinced that the Democracy of New Jersey, *without any encouragement whatever from you*, will turn to you for leadership in the coming campaign, and I do not believe that you can resist such a call."[1]

He predicted Wilson's nomination for Governor in 1910 and for the Presidency in 1912.

The address at Elizabeth, on "The Living Principles of Democracy" had indeed made a tremendous impression. It was widely quoted as a "terse and eloquent discourse upon vital matters." Lyman Abbott, who read the speech with great interest, wished the Democratic party would adopt as its platform the programme which Wilson had proposed, though he confessed himself too much of a Hamiltonian to accept it.[2]

Wilson's own reaction toward these demands is expressed in a letter a little later to his old friend Dabney:

"I find myself very much disinclined to go into politics, but I must say that it is getting a little difficult to keep out

[1]March 28, 1910.

[2]Letter from Dr. Lyman Abbott to Woodrow Wilson, April 8, 1910.

of them in the present situation of affairs—not so much the present situation in the University as the present movement of opinion among my friends in this part of the country."[1]

No doubt this popular political call, not less than attractive offers from other universities,[2] fortified his feeling of independence. All his life long, politics had indeed been his primary interest: but he now wanted, before he considered active participation, to win the battle at Princeton. He considered it a duty to Princeton not only, but a notable victory would serve as a distinguished introduction to public life should he care to make the change. On the other hand, if he could not make his ideals prevail, if his leadership were thwarted, he could step into the larger political field, though with less prestige, and still carry forward the essentials of his programme.

During the next weeks, there was much animated discussion. Wilson had powerful support. He was the "best asset of Princeton," and even men who opposed his ideas were eager to keep him in the university. To keep him, but make him, as he said, "bow down to the golden calf."

There were many signs during the weeks after the explosion at Pittsburgh that the tide was again setting in Wilson's favor. He was a determined and resourceful leader—the kind of fighting leader with a constructive programme who, given time, works miracles. It was already clear that the campaign for a trustee was going against Wilson's opponents. At the following June meeting, indeed, Joline was defeated. With the Board again supporting him, Wilson felt that he could regain control of the situation and, by powerful appeals to the alumni, secure the ultimate recognition of his principles. He could

[1] April 19, 1910.

[2] The University of Minnesota was again offering him its presidency, and trustees of Peabody College were asking him to become its head at a salary quite unprecedented at that time.

THE GRADUATE COLLEGE AT PRINCETON WITH THE CLEVELAND MEMORIAL TOWER

then make Princeton the "ideal university" of which he had dreamed.

But Fate, Chance—"Providence," as Wilson's stern old Presbyterian ancestors would have called it—after all plays a vast part in shaping human affairs.

On May 18, 1910—at the height of the struggle—an old man died in Salem, Massachusetts. His name was Isaac C. Wyman. He came of a distinguished New England family. His grandfather, John Wyman of Salem, gave George Washington £8,000 to fit a regiment of men. His father, Isaac, as a boy of sixteen, fought with Washington in the battle of Princeton. He himself was graduated from Princeton with the class of 1848, eight years before Woodrow Wilson was born.

When Wyman's will was opened after his death, it was discovered that he had left everything to Princeton University chiefly for the purposes of the graduate school. More than that, Dean West was named, with Wyman's counsel, as one of the trustees.[1] West hurried at once to Salem, and on May 22d he and his co-trustee, John M. Raymond, telegraphed to Wilson:

"Will of Isaac Wyman in which we are named as executors and trustees was filed in Salem yesterday. Residuary estate left principally for graduate college of Princeton University. Copy of will to be sent to you to-day or to-morrow. Impossible at present to state value of gift for graduate college, but it will probably be at least two millions and may be more."

It can be imagined what such a message must have meant to Wilson. A veritable challenge from the dead! It was plain, of course, that with West a trustee, the bequest would be used so far as possible for the projection of his ideas. At the same time, it would entrench West him-

[1] Dean West had talked at length in the previous year with John M. Raymond, Wyman's counsel.

self in his hold upon the graduate school as never before.

It is related that Mrs. Wilson heard her husband laughing aloud in his study. When she went in to inquire, he held up the telegram and said:

"We have beaten the living, but we cannot fight the dead. The game is up."[1]

The next day the nation knew of the gift. The newspapers gave exaggerated accounts of the amount of the Wyman fortune, reporting that the bequest would reach $10,000,000.[2] Princeton was roundly congratulated. What could a university not do with so many millions!

On the night of May 23d, Wilson held a long conference with the friends who had been his strongest supporters in the graduate college controversy—men who felt, as he did, that educational principles, and not money, should determine the policies of the university. Fine, Daniels, Capps, and Abbott were present. Conklin was away. After long discussion, the group agreed that the Wyman bequest changed the aspects of the controversy. A careful examination of the will showed that, while West was an executor, the actual control of the money would be in the hands of the Board of Trustees. This would enable the university, if properly guided, to build up a strong graduate school with "a great graduate faculty . . . to whom graduate students will of necessity resort. This makes it possible to consider the question of housing them and taking care of them from an entirely different point of view."[3]

As for West himself, he was so entrenched in his position as executor of the Wyman estate that he could not, of course, be disturbed.

It was plain enough to Wilson and to his advisers that he was defeated. He was prepared to admit it and do the

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[1]Professor Stockton Axson to the author.

[2]As a matter of fact, all the early accounts were overestimates, including that of West.

[3]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. Hiram Woods, May 28, 1910.

best he could, until his own personal decisions were made, to forward the interests of the university. He did not want to be "small or petulant."

". . . I am afraid it would seem small and petulant if I were to resign in the circumstances, though I must say that my judgment is a good deal perplexed in the matter. I want to stand by, if it is possible to do so with any degree of efficiency."[1]

But it was "not with a very light heart," as he wrote to Thomas D. Jones, that he went forward with the necessary conferences with the trustees. If he had difficulty in controlling a gift of $500,000 how could he make headway against such a veritable golden flood as the Wyman bequest? The whole Princeton constituency would oppose him. He tried, however, to put the best face he could upon his defeat in the interest of the university.

"I said to them[2] that in my opinion (it was also, of course, the opinion of the men in the Faculty I have mentioned)[3] West should remain in his present office as Dean of the Graduate School, because it was eminently desirable, in view of the extraordinary discretion granted him in Mr. Wyman's will, that he should be included in our counsels and not excluded from them, and since it was manifestly necessary, in the circumstances, to deal with him as if of course he intended to do the right thing.

"I said also that this great gift of millions made it clear that we did not have to depend upon the attractions, or fear the repulsions, of the Graduate College in building up a graduate school, that is to say, a body of graduate students and teachers. It enables us to secure a great graduate faculty. Their presence will make a large body of serious graduate students certain. This alters the whole

[1]Woodrow Wilson to Dr. Hiram Woods, May 28, 1910.

[2]Mr. Cadwalader and Mr. Palmer, at a conference in New York.

[3]Dean Fine, Professors Daniels, Capps, and Abbott.

perspective, therefore, of the question of the graduate residential hall. I deemed it necessary in the circumstances, therefore, that I should accept defeat in the matter of the location of the college. I would no longer fight its location on the Golf Links.

"All of this I said upon the explicit condition that Mr. Procter was to leave us absolutely free in all other respects;[1] for of course the only settlement called for was with regard to Mr. Procter's gift. There was no settlement necessary with regard to Mr. Wyman's bequest, except that that made it desirable that West should remain Dean."[2]

But he reserved decision as to his own future course as president.

"I left the matter open in my own mind, in the conversation, as to my own relations to the University. I did not make this explicit in the conversation, but I said nothing to bind myself to remain if the temper of the Pyne party should, in spite of the expectations of Mr. Cadwalader and Mr. Palmer, prove implacable and hostile. . . .

"Nevertheless, I stand ready to remain and to do my best, if there is a reasonable change in this respect. If there is not, it seems to me that the present situation will be only indefinitely continued. . . .

"Pray do not understand me as having lost hope. I am merely telling you the facts as they are, and it is a very deep pleasure to me to know how much interested you will be and how thoroughly I can count upon your comprehension and sympathy."[3]

As to his resignation, he also wrote to I. L. White:

"I had either to yield in the matter of the site and

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[1]Overtures were being made by the West faction at this time to have Procter renew his offer, and it now appeared that he would do so.

[2]Woodrow Wilson to Thomas D. Jones, May 30, 1910.

[3]*Ibid.*

remain in control of the administration of the University and stand by my splendid friends in the Faculty and Board, or else to retire. It was the unanimous judgment of the men upon whom I most depend that my retirement would probably mean a very serious demoralization here and I did not think that I would have the right to risk that."[1]

It was now near Commencement at Princeton; it proved one of the bitterest periods in Wilson's entire life. A defeat in his dearest visions to a man of Wilson's temperament went hard. It went hard with those whom he loved. As Mrs. Wilson wrote to her cousin, Mary Hoyt:

"We are certainly going through deep waters. There is no light at all yet. Woodrow has not even heard from his own friends."[2]

Wilson's triumphant enemies made it no easier for him.

"On Saturday last there was a meeting of the Committee on Grounds and Buildings, at which Mr. Henry, Mr. Green, Mr. Russell and Mr. Pyne displayed their old attitude towards me, without the slightest change of feeling, apparently, and I must say that I was greatly discouraged by the meeting."[3]

The emphasis at Commencement was upon the celebration of the Wyman gift and the glorification of West and Pyne. The social atmosphere of Princeton, dominated largely by Wilson's opponents, was charged with hostility to the president. It permeated social activities. One of the ladies of Princeton gave a reception in which the wife of the president was not invited, as was invariably the custom, to a place in the receiving line.

But Wilson went through it without giving evidence of the bitterness he felt. He played the game to the end.

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[1]June 15, 1910.

[2]May 27, 1910.

[3]Woodrow Wilson to Thomas D. Jones, May 30, 1910.

He went to a dinner at West's house to celebrate the Wyman bequest. He attended a ceremonial commemorating Moses Taylor Pyne's quarter century of service as a Princeton trustee. He presented the silver cup to Pyne with the following words:

"Mr. Pyne, I have the pleasure and the honour to-day to speak as the representative of a great body of our fellow alumni who are grateful to you for the extraordinary services you have rendered the University we all love. For twenty-five years you have served her with a devotion and generosity beyond all praise, through dark days and bright. Your chief thought has always seemed to be of her, and it has been in no small part through the stimulation of your example that hundreds of Princeton men have learned how to translate their affection into action. This vase is in itself very beautiful, but what it signifies is much more beautiful and could hardly be embodied in any possible form by the art of the silversmith. It is a tribute of honour, of sincere admiration, and of deep personal affection. May it always serve to remind you of that best thing a man may earn this side the grave: the homage of his fellows, of his comrades and equals, for his devotion and service."

Those who heard his Baccalaureate address on June 12th spoke of the eloquence and power of it. The very text seemed to refer significantly to the problem of the time:

"... we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

At the senior celebration, in which the "faculty hits" were regarded as a gauge of student feeling, the lines to Dean West were as follows:

> Here's to Andy eight million West,
> Sixty-three inches around the vest,
> To get him Boston tried her best,
> He winked his eye—you know the rest.

Everyone waited to hear what would be said of Wilson. It was a revision of the song of two years before:

> Here's to Woodrow, King divine,
> Who rules this place along with Fine.
> We have no fear he'll leave this town
> To try for anybody's crown![1]

Whatever else Wilson had lost, he had not lost the enthusiastic admiration of the students.

"At the commencement exercises when the valedictorian of my class pronounced his farewell it was not the ordinary good-bye. It was Woodrow Wilson's valedictory too. Tears streamed down his face as the students gave him again and again that day in thunderous cheers a testimonial of their affection and esteem. They knew little of the merits of the Graduate School controversy and cared less. They knew only that he was a strong man, a capable teacher and an inspiration to them all."[2]

Nor had he lost his hold upon the mass of the alumni. At the luncheon on June 14th, he received a veritable ovation, and what was more to the point, the result of the alumni vote for trustee showed that Joline, the opposition candidate, had been defeated by a large majority. It was everywhere regarded as a vote of confidence in him.

It was plain enough before Commencement was over that, if he could not secure the votes of conservative trustees or make way against millions in money, he did command the hearts and voices of the great mass of

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[1]On this occasion they sang to Professor Hibben:

> "We call him Jack,
> The whitest man in all the fac."

And to Stockton Axson:

> "Who works us hard but lets us through."

[2]David Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson*, p. 32.

students, faculty, and alumni. And the realization of this braced his spirits. As he wrote on the day after the alumni luncheon:

"I do not feel that the fight here is hopeless. On the contrary, I think that a good deal has already been gained and that perhaps all that is necessary is a steady pressure, pressure, pressure in the right direction. That, after all, is the way in which all reforms are accomplished, and it seems to me the business of all men now interested in Princeton to see to it that the right sort of opinion is created and increased and reinforced."[1]

At the Commencement meeting of the Board of Trustees, the whole matter of the Wyman bequest, the Procter gift, and the graduate school came up for discussion. Wilson, as president, made a statement along the lines already indicated, and concluded with the words:

"I take pleasure in recommending the acceptance of these gifts."[2]

Wilson's presidency of Princeton really ended at Commencement in June, 1910, although he did not formally resign until October.

He was now under great pressure to consider the nomination for the Governorship in New Jersey. If his defeat at Princeton was bitter to him, the struggle he had made had added enormously to his prestige. The mass of American people understood his position exactly, and believed that he was right. But Wilson hesitated regarding his obligation to the university. He disliked to appear to "resign in petulance," and finally consulted a number of his trusted friends as to what they considered his duty to be. On July 1st, he wrote from Lyme, Connecticut, where he had gone to spend the summer with his family:

[1]Letter to I. L. White, June 15, 1910.

[2]Minutes of the Board of Trustees.

MY DEAR CLEVE:

I shall never forget that little visit or the impressions it made upon me! May God bless you. And for your letter, too, received this morning. It raises one's whole estimate of the world to be associated with such men! The question I am debating with myself is as perplexing as ever, but my heart is light because of my friends.

Last evening I got the following telegram from David Jones, after a conference he had held with Cyrus, Tom. Jones, and McIlvaine.[1] Can you imagine anything finer?

"Chicago, 30 June, 1910.

"All four concur unreservedly in the opinion that no obligation whatever exists on your part, either to any individual supporter or to the University as a whole, which should deter you from following your own inclination. Question what you had better do is largely personal to yourself. We do not feel sufficiently clear on the subject to advise. We appreciate your perplexity and our sympathies are and will continue to be with you. Whatever your conclusion may be, you can rely on our hearty support in any field of service you may enter upon.

"D. B. JONES."

I feel a richer man for having had this experience in dealing with noble, public spirited men. Whatever I may decide, I shall have steadier hopes and confidences.

Give my warmest regards to Mrs. Dodge. She is always so sweet to me. I will of course let you know immediately what conclusion I come to.

With warmest affection,
Gratefully and faithfully Yours,
WOODROW WILSON

MR. CLEVELAND H. DODGE.

He also asked Dr. Jacobus to come to Lyme to discuss the advisability of resigning the presidency of Princeton. Wilson said that he had made it a point during all the years that he had lectured to students at Prince-

[1] Cyrus H. McCormick, Thomas D. Jones, and James H. McIlvaine, all trustees of Princeton.

ton and Johns Hopkins, to urge them to respond to their political duties if they were called upon, and never to let their private interests interfere. He said that now that the call had come to him, he did not see how he could ever again face students unless he himself acted according to his own advice.

On September 15, 1910, Wilson was nominated by the Democratic party for Governor of New Jersey. He entered upon his career as a statesman.

It was no doubt a great relief to Wilson's opponents at Princeton to have him withdraw. They proceeded at once to build their beautiful—very beautiful—graduate college quadrangle on the golf links. The tower, a memorial to Grover Cleveland, can be seen, in all its surpassing loveliness, for miles across the countryside. More than any other outward feature it has become the mark, the symbol, of Princeton. And John Grier Hibben, who had become one of Wilson's strongest opponents in the faculty, was elected president of the university.

These changes, however, did not settle the problems that Wilson saw so clearly—the fundamental problems of education and administration.

Nor was the status of Dean West finally determined by Wilson's withdrawal. "It has never been possible," as Wilson had written long before, "to govern West in any respect." Would he not use his newly acquired strength to draw the graduate department more than ever away from the university administration? And was it possible that a great institution could live without the unity of control and administration for which Wilson fought so vigorously?[1]

[1]In 1912, during the heat of the Presidential campaign, Wilson wrote a statement regarding his connection with the graduate college controversy, in reply to a letter of Grover Cleveland which his enemies threatened to publish. Cleveland's letter being withheld, Wilson's reply never saw the light. It is such a clear statement of the whole situation as Wilson saw it, and is so characteristic of the man, that it is published in full in the appendix which follows this chapter.

Exactly what Wilson predicted came to pass. Within the next two years, Dean West attempted to secure the powers which he had failed to obtain under Wilson's régime. In 1912, a committee of the Board was appointed to revise the by-laws. Pyne, West, and Hibben made a suggested revision of the chapter relating to the graduate school in such terms as to establish it upon a practically autonomous basis—with West, of course, in control. Members of the Board, led by Dr. Jacobus, made a vigorous fight upon these proposals and succeeded in rewriting the by-laws so that the graduate school in every detail of its administration was placed securely under the control of the president of the university and the standing committees of the Board of Trustees.

In referring to this important change, Henry B. Thompson says:

"What happened after his [Wilson's] departure was this: the management of the Graduate College was . . . taken from the Graduate College Committee of the Board of Trustees, which was a West Committee. President Hibben saw the necessity of this, and Dean West was made a member ex-officio of the Curriculum Committee. This forced him to discuss all questions in open committee and he was controlled always by a majority of the vote of this Committee."[1]

One of Wilson's chief contentions regarding the graduate school was thus realized—after he had gone.

It is to be noted in passing that both Wilson and West, strong men of intense convictions, succeeded, each in his own way, in placing an indelible stamp upon Princeton University. Such men always succeed—and always fail—and the Institution they serve finally grows up to them and around them, using them both. West's labours added beauty and distinction to the outward habiliments of the

[1]Henry B. Thompson to the author.

place, Wilson changed the inner life. Even the site of the graduate college, in the healing processes of time, has become less of a problem. While there are graduate school professors at Princeton who lament to this day the separation of graduate and undergraduate life, regret the distance between the living quarters of the graduate students and the laboratories and libraries where they work, yet the very physical growth of the institution, to say nothing of the use of new means of transportation, somewhat minimizes distance and isolation. And the graduate school itself, under the new control and with a greatly enlarged faculty, has made remarkable progress.

Wilson's ideas and ideals are still the living ferment of Princeton University, and after twenty years are just coming to rich fruition. For he left behind him in the faculty a group of extraordinary men who had felt the inspiration of his great personality, accepted his ideals of scholarship and of service, and were able through the preceptorial system that he instituted to communicate much of that inspiration to their students. Although Wilson resented bitterly the choice of Hibben as his successor in the presidency, Hibben was none the less the type of man, the conciliator, the just and self-effacing administrator, who was needed to hold the institution steady until it could fully assimilate the new ideas. He has been a devoted promoter of certain of the great essentials of Wilson's programme and has made two of Wilson's strong supporters, Eisenhart, dean of the faculty, and Gauss, dean of the college.

To-day Princeton University is developing a new intellectual impetus, unique among American universities, that should ultimately give it that preëminence of leadership which Wilson craved so ardently. Great problems that Wilson perceived, problems for example of the relationship of the "inner purpose of the university" and the "outside

activities"—the circus and the sideshows!—still remain, and will continue to be irritating until boldly faced as Wilson faced them.

Wilson himself did not live to see the harvest of his labours—what true prophet does?—but as he himself said:

"What difference does it make if we ourselves do not reach the uplands? We have given our lives to the enterprise, and that is richer, and the moral is greater."[1]

[1]Address at Newark, New Jersey.

APPENDIX

In 1912, during the heat of Wilson's campaign for the Presidency, it was rumoured that a letter written by Grover Cleveland, attacking Wilson for his attitude during the controversies at Princeton, was about to be published by his enemies. Such a letter from a leader so revered by the Democracy as Grover Cleveland could not fail to exercise a profound influence. Wilson's friends urged him to prepare a reply which could be used the moment the attack was made. He wrote out a careful statement in his own hand, afterward revising a typewritten copy. But the Cleveland letter was withheld, the judgment of the opposition leaders being that it might do them more harm than good, and therefore Wilson's reply was never published. Since it gives his own final account of the graduate college controversy, and since it so accurately expresses his spirit and point of view, it is here reproduced in full:

"If this is in fact an authentic utterance of Mr. Cleveland's, it is, no doubt, an echo of certain controversies at Princeton which I had hoped, for the sake of the University, I should not be obliged to revert to. It has nothing to do with politics.

"I can perhaps indicate in a few sentences the things that were in debate,—though the debate itself would be a very complicated thread to trace. Professor Andrew F. West, Dean of the Graduate School at Princeton, many years ago worked out a plan for a beautifully appointed house of residence for the fellows and some of the graduate students of the University, of which, as he then conceived it, we all thought well. It was to be placed at the geographical heart of the University, in close neighbourhood to the libraries and laboratories, where the work of the men in residence might tell in all its seriousness upon the

general life of the University, only too apt to be ignorant and negligent of the claims and interest of real scholarship and the scholarly life. But, as the years went by, and the time approached when it was thought his plan might be put into operation, it greatly changed in his own mind, and lost all promise of its general use and effect upon the University. He wished his 'Graduate College,' which was in fact only to be an elaborate hall of residence, to be surrounded by gardens,—set off at a distance from the rest of the University, in order that its residents might be secluded to a life of their own, separated from the rest of the graduate students of the University as well as from the undergraduates, whose ideals their example had originally been intended to affect,—away from the libraries and laboratories, where it would be nothing but a beautiful place of retreat. I, for one, could not support such a plan.

"Mr. Cleveland was a member of the Board of Trustees of the University, and had been made chairman of its standing committee on the Graduate School. Dean West was his neighbour and was in constant attendance upon him. In the last years of his life,—the years in which Dean West's plan underwent its most undesirable changes, —Mr. Cleveland's health and vigour were failing. He was much shut in, was very little in contact with the outer world, hardly at all in contact with the general life of the University. During those same years the movement of college life at Princeton (naturally one of the most democratic of the colleges) away from democracy to club life developed very rapidly, indeed. As President of the University, I met it and felt it at every turn. I found myself obliged to fight for a return to democracy all along the line, or else know that the young men in the University were not being properly prepared for American life or imbibing American ideals.

"Mr. Cleveland did not perceive these things. He would

not accept the very earnest representations I made to him of a change of conditions to which I knew he would be very sensitive if he once got sight of them. He remained under the influence of the small group of men who were always about him. He did not see how radically Dean West's plan had swung away from its first form and purpose, and continued to champion it with all his force. When I opposed it in the essential particular of its site and consequent spirit and character, and sought by every possible suggestion to bring it back to what it had originally been intended to be, he accused me of bad faith.

"I can only deplore the fact that this great man should not have seen that the same forces were at work in the University which it had become our duty to fight throughout the nation,—forces which were making against democracy and for special privilege in the University which I know he conscientiously sought to serve. Since his death Professor West's ideas have been carried out. The graduate hall of residence is being erected upon a site far removed from the rest of the University buildings. It is to cost about a million dollars and is to house somewhat less than a hundred students; is to have a dining hall which will itself cost two hundred thousand dollars, a special gift by Mr. William Cooper Procter, of Cincinnati; and the beautiful tower which is to be erected in memory of Mr. Cleveland, by the subscription of many hundreds of citizens of the Republic, is to be part of the great structure. The pouring in of money has overwhelmed all opposition and Professor West's ideals of university life have for the time prevailed at Princeton."[2]

INDEX

INDEX

Abbott, Prof. Frank Frost, 288, 346; 347 *footnote*
Abbott, Dr. Lyman, 343
Adams, Charles Francis, 218, 259–60, 298
Adams, Dr. H. B., dines with Wilson and Walter H. Page, 56
Adams, Prof. H. C., dines with Wilson and Walter H. Page, 56
Alabama, University of, Wilson offered the presidency of, 21
Alden, Henry Mills, 126
Alderman, President E. A., 248 *footnote*
Alexander, Henry Eckert, predicts Wilson's nomination for Governor of New Jersey in 1910 and for the Presidency in 1912, 343
American Academy of Arts and Letters, Wilson elected a member of, 271–2
American Historical Association, Wilson elected president of, 118 *footnote*
Angell, President James B., of University of Michigan, 22
Annin, Robert E., author of *Woodrow Wilson*, 163 *footnote;* 218, 328 *footnote*
An Old Master, published by Scribner's, 112; dedicated to Robert Bridges, 112
Armstrong, H. Howard, 244 *footnote*
Atlantic Monthly, Wilson's article on Walter Bagehot, in, 26; his unsigned reviews in, 105; his article on "The Making of the Nation," in, 126; his article, "Politics, 1857–1907," in, 255
Axson, Prof. Stockton, 23, 33; 42, 47 footnotes, 52, 63–4; with Wilson on a trip to England in 1899, 85–97; 101 *footnote; Mere Literature*, Wilson's book, dedicated to, 113; 130; 133, 150, 155, 161, 164 *footnotes;* on Wilson's "nomination" for the Presidency in 1906, 197; Wilson outlined his vision of a reconstructed Princeton to him in 1897, 215; 245 *footnote;* 249, 252, 266–7 *footnotes;* Wilson tells him to decline for him any offer to nominate him for the Vice Presidency in 1908, 277; 346 *footnote*

Babcock, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Maltbie D., 56, 58
Bagehot, Walter, article on, by Wilson in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 26
Bassett, Prof. John Spencer, 126 *footnote*
Beaty, Julian B., 164 *footnote*
Black, Rev. Hugh, 87
Bridges, Robert, helps to secure Wilson an opportunity at Princeton, 2–6; Wilson's book, *An Old Master*, dedicated to, 112; 128 *footnote;* 191
Brougham, H. B., his editorial in the New York *Times*, February 3, 1910, on the controversy at Princeton, sets the country afire, 328; on August 21, 1924, explains where he got his facts for his famous editorial, etc., 328 *footnote*
Bryan, William Jennings, looked at with disfavour by Wilson in 1897, 25; Wilson says he is "foolish and dangerous in his theoretical beliefs," 277
Bryce, James, his *American Commonwealth* reviewed by Wilson, 106, 123
Burgess, John W., his book, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, reviewed by Wilson, 106–7
Butler, Prof. Howard Crosby, 290, 291
Butler, Nicholas Murray, 139; 203, 236 *footnotes*
Butler, Pierce, asks Wilson if he would accept presidency of University of Minnesota, 313

Cadwalader, John L., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40, 157, 286; 347 *footnote;* 348
Cambridge University, Wilson enthusiastic over his visit to, 92–3
Capps, Prof. Edward, 173 *footnote;* 288, 290, 291, 309, 323, 346; 347 *footnote*
Carey, Henry C., 18
Carnegie, Andrew, asked by Wilson for an endowment for Princeton, 155; Wilson visits him and Mrs. Carnegie in Scotland, 280–1; Cleveland H. Dodge and Wilson endeavour to interest him in giving a large sum of money for Princeton, 284
Carnegie Foundation, Wilson becomes a member of the Board of the, 272
Cleveland, Grover, policies as President strongly approved by Wilson, 24; at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 139; makes a motion to the Princeton Board of Trustees to give Wilson sweeping powers as president, 144; suggests that a large residence be rented for Princeton's Graduate College, 187; made chairman of the Princeton trustees' committee on the graduate school, 187–8; fears that Wilson's

Cleveland, Grover—*Continued.*
social-coördination programme will interfere with plan for Graduate College at Princeton, 222–3, 234–5; supports Dean West's plans in the Graduate College project, 224–5; apparently did not realize Dean West's purpose, 225; votes in favour of Wilson's social reorganization plan for Princeton, 232, 234–5; death of, 285; his relations at Princeton with Wilson, 285–6; approved site for Princeton Graduate College recommended by Ralph Adams Cram, 287; tower of the Graduate College at Princeton a memorial to, 354; the rumour in 1912 that he had written a letter attacking Wilson, 358
Cleveland, Mrs. Grover, 285
Cleveland, Richard, son of Grover Cleveland, 273
Close, Gilbert F., secretarial assistant to Wilson at Princeton, 209
Cochran, Peyton, 12 *footnote*
Columbia University, Wilson gives a series of lectures at, 236
Congressional Government, Wilson's purpose in writing, 99;
Conklin, Prof. Edwin Grant, 171–2 *footnotes;* 288, 290, 291, 309, 323
Constitutional Government in the United States, (Wilson's book), 102; Wilson outlines a series of lectures, later published in, 226
Cornwall, Prof. Henry B., 149
Coxey's "Army," 23
Craig, Prof Hardin, 12 *footnote*
Cram, Ralph Adams, architect for the reconstruction of Princeton, 176; advises building the Princeton Graduate College on the campus, 286–7
Croswell, J. C., 151 *footnote*
Cuyler, C. C., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40, 157

Dabney, R. Heath, 99 *footnote;* 136
Daily Princetonian, at Commencement, in 1909, praises the Preceptorial System, 299
Daniels, Prof. Winthrop M., 13, 14 *footnotes;* his course in sociology at Princeton opposed by President Patton, 17–18; 19–20 *footnotes;* describes Wilson's study at Princeton, 46; says Wilson was never a prohibitionist, 152; 163; 178, 225 *footnotes;* 249; in faculty meeting, September 26, 1907, presents motion supporting Wilson in quad struggle, 256, 290; 312 *footnote;* 323; 339 *footnote;* 346; 347 *footnote*
Davis, John D., 335
Davis, J. Lionberger, trustee of Princeton, 272–3
Davis, Parke H., 15 *footnote*
Davis, Robert H., 5 *footnote*
Delineator, The, Wilson's article, "The Ideal University," in, 304
Dennis, Samuel, 281
De Sweinitz, Dr., tells Wilson in 1906 that he has arteriosclerosis and orders him to live a quiet and retired life, 201
DeWitt, Dr. John, 153 *footnote;* 261
Dicey, Prof. Albert Venn, Wilson calls on, at Oxford, 93
Division and Reunion, Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart asks Wilson to write, 123; the best of Wilson's historical writings, 123–4
Dixon, Dr., Trustee of Princeton, 324–5
Dod, S. Bayard, 130
Dodd, William E., author of *Woodrow Wilson and his Work*, 108, 124, 125 *footnotes;* 333
Dodge, Cleveland H., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40, 130; 134, 151 *footnotes;* 157; 203 *footnote;* 216, 222; 223 *footnote;* 229, 232, 238–9; Wilson treasures his unflagging support in the quad struggle at Princeton, 240, 254, 261; 267, 271, 310 *footnotes;* 319, 324, 326, 332, 353
Dowden, Mr. and Mrs., of Dublin, 96

Eberhart, Governor A. O., 313
Eisenhart Professor Luther P., dean of the faculty at Princeton, 356
Eliot, Charles W., president of Harvard University, an educational leader, 27–8; Wilson extols, 337
Elliott, Prof. Edward, 50 *footnote;* 249
Fine, Dean Henry B., 9, 149, 163, 173, 226–7; 238, 245 *footnotes;* 249, 288, 289, 290, 309, 323, 346; 347 *footnote*
Finley, Dr. John H., 12 *footnote*
Folk, Joseph, 192
Forum, The, Wilson's article on "University Training and Citizenship," in, 28; prints Wilson's Princeton Sesquicentennial address, 34; publishes Wilson's article, "A Calendar of Great Americans," 102, Wilson's unsigned reviews in, 106; Wilson reviews Goldwin Smith's writings in, 108
Fosdick, Raymond B., describes Wilson as a lecturer, 10, 181; on the Wilson–West controversy, 181
Fraser, George C., 226 *footnote*

Garfield, Harry A., Prof., 172 *footnote;* 226–7, 249; Wilson congratulates him upon his election to the presidency of Williams College, 255
Garrett, Robert, of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 176, 222, 286, 319
Gauss, Prof. Christian, dean of the College at Princeton, 356
Gilder, Richard Watson, 53 *footnote;* 110, 140
Gilman, Daniel Coit, president of Johns Hopkins University, 21, 142 *footnotes*
Grantham, Lord Justice, 90

Grayson, Dr. Cary T., 277–8
Green, Judge Caleb, opposes Wilson's coming to Princeton, 5, 324–5, 349
Green's *Short History of the English People*, Wilson's model as a historian, 118, 121
Griggs, Governor John, of New Jersey, presides at Princeton Sesquicentennial celebration, 33

Hadley, President Arthur Twining, of Yale, 139
Hamlin, Charles S., 168 *footnote*
Harper, Prof. George M., on Wilson's literary style, 110–11; 149, 167, 173, 249 *footnotes;* 271
Harper & Brothers, 111 *footnote*
Harper's Weekly, Colonel Harvey in issue of March 10, 1906, comments on his own "nomination" of Wilson for the Presidency, 198; Colonel Harvey, in issue of May 15, 1909 expects Wilson's election as Governor of New Jersey in 1910 and nomination for President in 1912, 300
Hart, Prof. Albert Bushnell, asks Wilson to write *Division and Reunion*, 123; tells Wilson: "You are fighting the cause of scholarship and education," 342
Harvey, Colonel George, at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 140; at dinner at the Lotos Club, February 3, 1906, "nominates" Wilson for the Presidency, 196–7; in *Harper's Weekly* for March 10, 1906, comments on his "nomination" of Wilson, 198; at the Democratic National Convention in 1908, 277; in *Harper's Weekly* for May 15, 1909, expects to see Wilson elected Governor of New Jersey in 1910 and nominated for President in 1912, 300
Haskins, Prof. Charles H., of Harvard, 124
Haverford College, Wilson speaks at, in October, 1908, 283
Hazen, Dr. A. W., 33 *footnote;* 94
Hedges, Job E., felicitates Wilson on his work at Princeton, 299–300
Hemphill, Colonel J. C., editor of the Charleston (South Carolina) *News and Courier*, refers to Wilson in January, 1906, as "the most promising of Southern candidates" for the Presidency, 196
Henry, Bayard, trustee of Princeton University, 222, 258, 349
Herald, New York, on the controversy at Princeton, 328 *footnote*
Hibben, John Grier, 52 *footnote;* 86; 131 *footnote;* 163, 168, 170–1, 184, 201; appointed acting president of Princeton when Wilson suffers a breakdown in 1906, 203; joins the opposition to Wilson at Princeton, 250; the intimate friendship between him and Wilson, 252; opposes Wilson's quad plans, 253; in faculty meeting, seconds Dr. Henry Van Dyke's motion in opposition to Wilson's quad plans, 256; the final breach of their friendship "left a permanent scar on Mr. Wilson's spirit," 267; in December, 1921, attacked the abuses of the club system at Princeton, 273; Wilson appoints him to faculty committee in charge of graduate school, 290; for an off-campus location for the Graduate College, 309; student song about him, 351 *footnote;* elected president of Princeton, 354; suggests putting the graduate school on an autonomous basis, 355; the type of man needed at Princeton at the time of his election to the presidency, 356
Hibben, Mrs. John Grier, friendship with Wilson, 52–3, 57, 85–6, 170–1, 252
History of the American People, A, dedicated to his wife, 113; Wilson says he wrote, mainly to instruct himself, 119; welcomed and approved at the time of its publication, it has not met the test of later historical criticism, 126; facsimile of a page of original manuscript, 127; translated into several foreign languages, 128; published October 28, 1902, 138
Hopkins, Prof. E. Washburn, 135 *footnote*
Howe, Prof. George, 49 *footnote*
Howells, William Dean, 140
Hoyt, Florence, 59 *footnote;* 132; 136, 329 *footnotes*
Hoyt, Mary W., describes Wilson at a football game, 15; describes home life of the Wilsons at Princeton, 50; 152 *footnote;* 349
Hughes, Charles Evans, 192
Hulbert, Mrs. (*See* Mrs. Mary Allen Peck)
Hunt, Prof. Theodore W., 7 *footnote;* 256
Hutton, Lawrence, Wilson calls on, at Oxford, 93; 137 *footnote*

Illinois, University of, Wilson offered the presidency of, 21
Imbrie, Andrew C., appointed financial secretary of Princeton University, 178; 238 *footnote;* 239, 242–3
Independent, The, publishes an article by Prov. Edwin E. Slosson, on Wilson's work at Princeton, March 10, 1909, 297
Ingle, Edward, 132

Jacobus, Dr. Melancthon W., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 207, 211, 222, 225, 233; 238 *footnote;* a tower of strength to Wilson in the quad struggle at Princeton, 241, 258–9, 262; urges Wilson not to resign from Princeton in 1907, 263–4; 270 *footnote;* 286; 288 *footnote;* 289–91, 310; 311 *footnote;* 319; moves that Mr. Proctor's gift be declined, 324; a loyal supporter of Wilson, 332, 335, 339, 353, 355
Jameson, Dr. J. Franklin, 45, 119 *footnotes*

Jameston Exposition, Wilson makes a speech at the, 236
Jefferson, Thomas, his full Americanism doubted by Wilson, 103–4
Johns Hopkins University, Wilson lectures at, 20
Johnston, Col. Richard Malcolm, 58
Joline, Adrian H., 333–4, 344
Jones, David B., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 130, 136–7, 156–7, 176–7, 222; writes to Wilson on the evils of class clubs at Princeton, 227–8, 233; Wilson leaned heavily upon him in the quad struggle at Princeton, 241, 258; 259 *footnote;* 263, 265, 271, 286, 319, 332, 353
Jones, Thomas D., 241–2 of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 241–2, 320, 324, 332, 347; 348–9 *footnotes;* 353

Knickerbocker Trust Co., fails, October 22, 1907, 260 *footnote*
Konkle, Burton von, 74 *footnote*

Lawrence, David, 336, 351 *footnotes*
"Lee, Robert E., An Appreciation," Wilson's address on, 119 *footnote*
LeFevre, Prof. Albert, 86
Lincoln, Abraham, referred to by Wilson as the "supreme American of our history," 104–5
Lincoln, Robert T., 140
Lionberger, Isaac H., 334, 341 *footnotes*
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 115 *footnote*
Long, The Hon. Breckinridge, 11 *footnote*
Lowell, Pres. A. Lawrence, of Harvard, 139, 168; in Commencement address at Princeton, 1909, praises Wilson's efforts, 298; offers to help Wilson in the controversy at Princeton, 332–3
Lynde, Rollin H., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40

Magie, Prof. William F., heads a committee to recommend reforms at Princeton, 133; 149 *footnote*
Magie, Chancellor W. J., of New Jersey, 140; 286, 311 *footnotes;* 318; 320 *footnote*
Maitland, Prof. Frederic W., Wilson calls on, at Cambridge, 78
Marburg, Theodore, 280
McCormick, Cyrus H., member of a group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40; a supporter of Wilson on the Princeton Board of Trustees, 157; 233, 236 *footnotes;* 242, 286, 319, 332, 353
McCormick, Mrs. Cyrus H., 269 *footnote*
McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Wilson sets forth a personal creed in an address at, 306–8
McCosh, Dr. James, President of Princeton, lecturing in philosophy at Princeton, 7–8; in verbal tilt with Wilson, 18–19; his solicitation of funds for Princeton, 155
McIlvaine, James H., trustee of Princeton University, 319, 353
McKinley, William, criticised by Wilson in 1897, 25
McSween, John, 77
Meiklejohn, Alexander, President of Amherst College, 86
Mere Literature (Wilson's book), 102; dedicated to Stockton Axson, 113
Miller, "Tom," 281
McAdoo, Mrs. William Gibbs (Eleanor Randolph Wilson), 47, 302 *footnotes*
Morgan, J. Pierpont, 140
Morgan, Junius S., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40; 137 *footnote*
Morley, John (Lord), 280, 281
Morris, Roland, invites Wilson to speak at Lawrenceville School, 11
Moschelles, Mr., portrait painter, 280
Minnesota, University of, Wilson offered presidency of, in 1909, 21, 313, and again in 1910, 344 *footnote*
Münsterberg, Prof. Hugo, of Harvard, 136
Murphy, Franklin, Governor of New Jersey, at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 139
Murphy, Franklin, Jr., 228, 246
Murray, Dean, 3

Nassau Literary Magazine, Wilson's essay on "William Earl Chatham," in, 116 *footnote*
Nebraska, University of, Wilson offered the presidency of, 21
Needham, H. B., 266 *footnote*
Nelson, B. F., of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, 313
New York Law School, Wilson lectures at, 20
North American Review, Wilson's article, "The Tariff Make-Believe," in, 306
Northrup, Dr. Cyrus, president of the University of Minnesota, 313

Ormond, Prof. Alexander T., 149 *footnote;* 249, 329
Osborn, Arthur H., 247 *footnote*
Osborn, Prof. Henry F., 9; 137 *footnote*
Outlook, The, interview with Wilson, "Woodrow Wilson's Views," by H. B. Needham, in, 266 *footnote*
Oxford University, Wilson enthusiastic over his visit to, 80–1, 93

Page, Walter Hines, as editor of the *Forum*, publishes Wilson's article on "University Training and Citizenship," 28; visits Wilson at Princeton, 54–5; at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 140; tells Wilson he is "eternally right" in the controversy at Princeton, 329

Palmer, Mr. Stephen S., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 319; 347 *footnote;* 348
Parkhurst, Dr. Charles H., uses Wilson's Princeton inaugural address as the text for a sermon, 143
Patton, Dr. Francis L., president of Princeton, discusses a professorship of "Public Law" with Wilson, 4; plans new departures at Princeton, 8; opposes course in sociology, arranged for by Wilson, 17; resigns as president of Princeton and suggests Wilson as his successor, 129–30; the feeling that Princeton had ceased making progress under him in 1902, 132; approved the project of a residential graduate college in 1896, 182
Peabody College, Wilson offered presidency of, 344
Peck, Mrs. Mary Allen (Mrs. Hulbert), her friendship with Wilson the target of innuendo, 267–9
Perry, Prof. Bliss, 16, 18, 42, 44, 53, 115–16, 225, 286 *footnotes*
Perry, Mrs. Bliss, 50, 52–3
Platt, Mrs., president of Women's Club at Denver, 72
Political Science Quarterly, Wilson's review of Bryce's *American Commonwealth* in, 106 *footnote*
Priest, Prof. George M., 332 *footnote*
Princeton, N. J., town of, social changes in, between 1890 and 1906, 216
Princeton University, was still the College of New Jersey when Wilson came to it in 1890, 7; Wilson elected president of, June 9, 1902, 129; Wilson's vision for the reorganization of, 154–69; Wilson plans the architectural reorganization of, 173–90; the quad struggle at, 213–74; the rise of eating clubs at, 217; Wilson launches his proposals to transform upper-class clubs, 219–21; Wilson's quad plans defeated in meeting of the Board of Trustees, October 17, 1907, 261; petition to President Hibben to abolish "bicker week" at, 273; committee appointed by President Hibben in 1924 attacks the club system at, 273; the Graduate College controversy, 1909–10, at, 275–357; William Cooper Procter's offer of $500,000 for the proposed Graduate College at, 294–6; Mr. Procter withdraws his offer, 327 *ff.*; the Isaac C. Wyman bequest for its Graduate College, 345–6; John Grier Hibben elected president of, 354; Wilson's ideas and ideals still the living ferment of, 356; Wilson's own final account of the Graduate College controversy at, 358–60
Procter, William Cooper, offers $500,000 for proposed Graduate College at Princeton, 294; gives his preference for a site exactly opposed to Wilson's purposes, 297; meets Wilson in New York, 308; proposed resolution in meeting of Princeton Board of trustees to accept his offer precipitates hot discussion, 310 *ff.*; how he intended the funds of his gift should be used, 310 *footnote;* meets Wilson again in New York, December 22, 1909, but he refuses to readjust the terms of his offer, 314, 316; accepts Wilson's compromise proposal, 322; withdraws his offer, 325; the controversy that followed the withdrawal of his offer, 327 *ff.*; at alumni meeting in St. Louis, which Wilson addresses, 336; overtures made to have him renew his offer, 348 *footnote;* the dining hall of the Graduate College his special gift, 360
Pyle, Howard, 30 *footnote;* 31
Pyne, Moses Taylor, one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40; 137 *footnote;* 157, 177, 182, 189, 207, 222, 233, 242; opposes Wilson in the quad struggle at Princeton, 258, 261, 265, 286, 290, 293; 299 *footnote;* 310, 313–15; sincere in his opposition to Wilson in the Graduate College controversy, 321–2, 328, 349; Wilson presents silver cup to, 350; suggests that the Graduate College be put upon an autonomous basis, 355
Pyne, Percy R., one of the group that keeps Wilson at Princeton in 1898, 40

Raymond, John M., executor and trustee of Isaac C. Wyman's estate, 345
Reed, Judge James H., 157 *footnote*
Reed, Thomas B., 139
Reid, Mrs. Harry Fielding (Edith G.), friendship with Wilson, 57, 61–2; 114, 135 *footnotes*
Reid, Prof. Harry Fielding, 57 *footnote*
Reid, Ogden, 281
Reid, Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw, 280
Remsen, Ira, President of Johns Hopkins, 139
Review of Reviews, The, article in, commending Wilson's quad plans, 259
Rhodes's *History of the United States*, Wilson's estimate of, 108
Ricketts, Miss, the teas at the home of, at Princeton, 53, 171; friendship with Wilson, 57
Riis, Jacob, 192
Roosevelt, Theodore, prevented by accident from attending Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 140; campaign of slander against, 268;
Ruckstull, F. W., 253 *footnote*

Sage, Mrs. Russell, 238–9, 241
Sayre, Mrs. Francis B. (Jessie Woodrow Wilson), 7; 47, 57, 140, 142, 268 *footnotes*
Scribner's Magazine, Wilson's article, "What is a College For?" in, 304

Scudder, Horace E., 107 *footnote;* 110, 111; 123 *footnote*
Seth, Professor, of Cornell, 86
Shaw, Mr., Lord Advocate for Scotland, 280
Shea, J. B., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 233
Sheldon, Edward W., helps to secure Wilson's appointment at Princeton, 6; a supporter of Wilson on the Princeton Board of Trustees, 242, 286, 291; 309 *footnote;* 318, 332
Shields, Prof. Charles W., 149 *footnote*
Sloane, Prof. William M., 3, 9
Slosson, Prof. Edwin E., 297
Smith, Goldwin, his book on American political history reviewed by Wilson, 108; 125 *footnote*
Smith, Lucy, friendship with Wilson, 59–60, 87
Smith, Mary, friendship with Wilson, 59–60
Stedman, Edmund Clarence, 140
Steffens, Lincoln, his articles on "The Shame of the Cities," 192
Stewart, Dr. George B., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 234 *footnote*
Stewart, John A., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, nominates Wilson for presidency of Princeton, 130, 319
Stribling, Colonel, of Markham, Virginia, 59 *footnote*
Sun, New York, letter in, signed "Ivy," attacking Wilson's quad plans for Princeton, 246; on the controversy at Princeton, 328 *footnote*
Sutphen, Van G., 329
Swann, Mrs. Josephine E. Thomson, bequest for Princeton from, 219, 296, 310; 311 *footnote;* 313, 316, 318

Taft, William H., nominated for the Presidency, 277; inaugurated in 1909, 300
Talcott, Charles, his "solemn covenant" with Wilson, 283
Tarbell, Ida M., her *History of the Standard Oil Company*, 192
Thilly, Prof. Frank, 169–171
Thompson, Henry B., of the Princeton Board of Trustees, 175–6; 178–9 *footnotes*, 291, 311–12, 319, 324; 322 *footnote;* 332, 355
Tedcastle, Mrs. Arthur W., 136 footnote
Times, New York, comments on Wilson's election as president of Princeton, 131; on the Princeton controversy, 327
Toy, Mrs. Crawford H. (Nancy), friendship with Wilson, 57, 63, 70; 109 *footnote*
Toy, Prof. Crawford H., 57 *footnote*; 70
Trinity College, Dublin, Wilson visits, 96
Turner, Prof. Frederick J., urged by the Wilsons to come to Princeton, 43; 120; his address on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," profoundly impresses Wilson, 124–5
Twain, Mark, at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 140; meets Wilson in Bermuda, 267–8

Vanderlip, Frank A., 284
Van Dyke, Dr. Henry, at Princeton Sesquicentennial celebration, 33; 54 *footnote;* 140, 226–7; 248 *footnote;* opposed to Wilson's quad plans at Princeton, 250; no personal animosity in his opposition to Wilson's quad plans, 253; was later appointed Minister to Holland by Wilson, 254; opposes Wilson's quad plans in faculty meeting, 256–7; attacks Wilson's quad ideas, 331
Van Hise, Charles R., President of the University of Wisconsin, 239
Virginia State Bar Association, Wilson addresses the, on "Leaderless Government," 36
Virginia, University of, Wilson offered the presidency of, 21
Von Suttner, Baroness, 280
Vreeland, Prof. W. U., 163; 174 *footnote;* 249, 302

Washington and Lee University, Wilson offered the presidency of, 21
Washington, Booker T., at Wilson's inauguration as president of Princeton, 139, 140
Washington, George, Wilson's book, dedicated to his wife, 113; too much a eulogy, 126; the occasion of the first "Wilson dinner," 126 *footnote*
Wesleyan University, Wilson leaves, for Princeton, 6
West, Dean Andrew F., professor of Latin at Princeton, 9; 148–9 *footnotes;* 163; one of the ablest men on the Princeton faculty, 180; the seeds of dissension between him and Wilson, 181–90; elected dean of the proposed graduate school at Princeton, 182; commends Wilson's ideals in address before the Western Association of Princeton Clubs, May, 1906, 200–1; offered the presidency of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but stays at Princeton, 209–11; his ideas on the subject of a Graduate College gradually changed, so that a clash with Wilson was inevitable, 223–4; his purpose to set himself up in a semi-independent sphere over the affairs of the Graduate College, 225; opposes Wilson's quad plans in a letter to him July 10, 1907, 250–1; voted for locating the Graduate College at Merwick, 286; the feeling against his unregulated control of the graduate school, 288; appointed by Wilson a member of new faculty committee which will now control graduate affairs, 290; building plans for graduate school criticized as being too lavish, 290–1; his interest in

West, Dean Andrew F.—*Continued.*
beautiful architecture at Princeton, 292–3; shows Wilson letter from William Cooper Procter offering $500,000 for proposed Graduate College if site is changed, 293–4; for an off-campus location of the Graduate College, 309; Wilson tries to avoid an open quarrel with him, 312; Wilson again refuses to make him the issue in the Graduate College controversy, 321; Wilson says West's ideas and ideals are not those of Princeton, 322; his entire conception of a Graduate College opposed by majority members of faculty committee, 323–4; executor and trustee of Isaac C. Wyman's estate, which leaves large bequest for Princeton Graduate College, 345; Princeton Board of Trustees takes management of the Graduate College out of his hands in 1912, 355; his labours for Princeton, 355–6; Wilson's final account of the Graduate College controversy, 358–60
White, Andrew D., president of Cornell University, 21 *footnote*
White, I. L., 348; 352 *footnote*
White, William Allen, 180 *footnote;*
Williams College, offer to Wilson to join the faculty of, 6
Winans, Prof. S. R., 149 *footnote*
Wilson, Eleanor Randolph. (*See* Mrs. William G. McAdoo)
Wilson, Ellen Axson, moves to Princeton when Wilson is appointed there, 7; learns of amazing conditions in examinations at Princeton, 16; inclined to have Wilson accept presidency of University of Illinois, 21; describes ovation to Wilson at Princeton Sesquicentennial celebration, 34; home life at Princeton, 41–2; indispensable assistant of her husband in his literary labours, 42–3; works out plans for a new house at Princeton, 45; in letters describes her home life with her children, 48–9; with her husband joins the Second Presbyterian Church at Princeton, 49; encourages Wilson's friendships with women, 59; the moving influence in Wilson's life, 63; Wilson's *George Washington* and *History* dedicated to her, 113; describes enthusiasm over Wilson's election as president of Princeton, 132; regrets that Wilson's career as a "man of letters" is threatened by his election to the presidency of Princeton, 135–6; goes to Europe with her husband in summer of 1903, 161; overwhelmed when Wilson is told by doctors in 1906 that he has arteriosclerosis, 202; in England with her husband and daughters, 203–7; attributes Wilson's breakdown in 1908 to "the loss of the friend he took to his bosom," 266; spends summer vacation in 1909 with her family at Old Lyme, Connecticut, 302; the situation at Princeton during the graduate college controversy difficult for her, 329, 349; (*see* also footnote references to Wilson's letters to her, throughout the volume, too numerous to list)
Wilson, Jessie Woodrow. (*See* Mrs. Francis B. Sayre.)
Wilson, Rev. Dr. Joseph Ruggles, father of Woodrow Wilson, comes to live with the Wilsons at Princeton, 41; his comment on his son's book, *George Washington*, 113; at his son's inauguration as president of Princeton, 142; dies January 21, 1903, 143
Wilson, Margaret, 7; 204–5 *footnotes*
Wilson, Thomas, of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, 313
Wilson, Woodrow, discusses a professorship of "Public Law" with Dr. Patton of Princeton, 4; opposition to his coming to Princeton, 5; elected professor, moves to Princeton, September, 1890, 6; his lecture subjects at Princeton, 9; his keen interest in the courses on public law, 9; his method as a teacher, 9; speaks at Lawrenceville School, 11; his powerful hold upon the student body at Princeton, 13; impatient with slovenliness of expression, 13; helps to build up the football team, 14; keen about games, 15; makes himself strongly felt in the faculty, 15; fights slack methods in examinations, 16; in opposition to President Patton over a course in sociology, 17; a keen and ruthless critic, 18; impatient with older members of the faculty, 18; his dignity of manner sometimes irritating, 19; his growing prestige at Princeton, 19; his work outside of Princeton, 20; offered the presidency of seven universities, 21; why he refused presidency of the University of Illinois, 22; feels himself held in, 23; "The 'West' is the great word of our history," 24; new economic and industrial problems following the panic of 1893 engage his thought, 24–5; opposed to William Jennings Bryan and William McKinley in 1897, 25; his article on Walter Bagehot in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1895, 26; feels that he is only a "literary politician," 27; disturbed by conditions in the university, 27; attacks problems of education, by a public address and an article in the *Forum*, 28; criticises President Patton and the Princeton faculty, 30; ill from overwork, 30; doctors order him to stop writing and take a long rest, 31; sails for Europe, May 30, 1896, 31; right arm crippled by neuritis, he starts practising writing with his left hand, 31–3, 76; on his return from Europe, he is "a man of fixed and resolute purpose," 33; delivers address at the Princeton Sesquicentennial celebration, October 21, 1896, 33–4; the Sesquicentennial

Wilson, Woodrow—*Continued.*
address printed in the *Forum*, December, 1896, 34; working to recover the full control of his arm, 36; addresses the Virginia Bar Association on "Leaderless Government," 36; Theodore Roosevelt "delighted" by one of his addresses, 38; a group of his friends agree to augment his income, and he agrees not to leave Princeton for five years, 39; hopeless of his usefulness at Princeton and of his influence in public life, wants to devote himself wholly to writing, 40; his home life and social contacts at Princeton near perfection, 41; his extraordinary ability to concentrate, 44; builds a new home, at 50 Library Place, and works to increase his earnings from his pen to pay for it, 45; at home could dance a jig with a silk hat tipped on one side of his head, and loved nonsense verses, 47; joins, with Mrs. Wilson, the Second Presbyterian Church at Princeton, 49; his summer vacations, 51; friends and friendships at Princeton, 51–7; his friendships with women 57–62; his wife the moving influence in his life, 63; the harmony of his life with Mrs. Wilson, 63–67; in demand as a speaker for all sorts of occasions, 68; speaks at the World's Fair in Chicago, 1893, 69; first cartoon of him, 69 *footnote;* lectures at Plymouth, Massachusetts, before Ethical Culturists, and at Colorado Springs, 70–1; lectures on" Liberty" at Denver, Colorado, 71–3; his Western trip a vivid experience, 73; his first trip abroad, 1896, 75–85; his right arm crippled by neuritis, he starts practising writing with left hand, (31-3), 76; his visit to Oxford in part responsible for his vision of a reconstructed Princeton, 80–1; second trip to England with Stockton Axson in 1899, 85–97; at Cambridge he received some of the enthusiasm afterward exhibited in his campaign for the reconstruction of Princeton, 92–3; the author, 98–128; his literary ambitions, 98–101; his purpose in writing *Congressional Government*, 99; literary style not an end, but a means, 100; desired passionately to become a great writer, 100–1; political writings, 101–9; his *Constitutional Government in the United States*, 102; his treatment of political leaders and thinkers in *Mere Literature*, 102–5; his review of Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, 106; his views of John W. Burgess, 106–7; his estimate of Rhodes's *History of the United States*, 108; reviews Goldwin Smith's work, 108; the essayist, 109–17; "I am an idealist, with the heart of a poet," 110; his literary writings often rejected, 112; his book, *An Old Master*, published by Scribner's, 112; loved the dedication of his books, 113; criticizes his own literary style, 113–14; the historian, 117–28; president of the American Historical Association, 118 *footnote;* says he wrote his *History of the American People* mainly to instruct himself, 119; his historical writings the by-product of his necessary studies, 119; his book *Division and Reunion* written at invitation of Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart, 123; influence of Prof. Frederick J. Turner on Wilson as a historian, 124–5; his book *George Washington* too much a eulogy, 126; his *History of the American People*, approved at its publication, does not meet the test of later historical criticism, 126; the *History* translated into several foreign languages, 128; conditions under which his historical writing was done, 128; election to the presidency of Princeton ended his literary work, 128; elected president of Princeton, June 9, 1902, 129; news of his election enthusiastically received, 131–3; begins work upon his inaugural address, 133–4; his joy over his election, 134–5; his inaugural reception as president of Princeton, 138–41; his inaugural address makes a profound impression, 141, 143; his vision of a new university, 143–53; alumni dinner in his honour at Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York, December, 1902, 143; given sweeping powers at Princeton, 144; in his first report to Princeton Board of Trustees he outlines a programme that would require $12,000,000, 146–48; the Faculty trusts him, 149; injects a new spirit into rules of scholarship and student discipline, 150–2; continues compulsory daily chapel, 152; alarm and resentment over his methods, 153; reorganizes the preceptorial system, 154–69; begins his campaign for funds for the new Princeton, 155; appeals to Andrew Carnegie, 155; changes his plan of seeking large endowments and asks for small subscriptions, 156; reconstructs the curriculum, 157–60; in summer of 1903 visits Europe with Mrs. Wilson, 161; hopeless about national politics in summer of 1904, 161; in early 1905 his health breaks and he spends five weeks convalescing in Florida, 161; delivers a speech before the Virginia Society of New York, November 29, 1904, 161; defines his proposed plan for the organization of the preceptorial system, 162–3; starts the task of finding fifty tutors, or "preceptors," 163; launches the new system in the fall of 1905, 164; the essentials of his plan, 165; his new system popular, 166; his preceptorial system "created a new Princeton," 168; strengthens the Princeton faculty, 169–73; tackles the problem of the architectural reorganization of Princeton, 173–90; regenerates

Wilson, Woodrow—*Continued.*
the Princeton Board of Trustees, 176–8; brings about the appointment of a financial secretary for Princeton, 178; the forces of opposition begin to challenge his leadership, 179–80; seeds of dissension between him and Dean West, 181–90; his "single-track" mind absorbed with his university work during the first three years of his presidency of Princeton, 190–3; for him the central purpose of the university was to prepare men to think, to lead, and to serve the state, 193–4; in the winter of 1905–6 seems to awaken to a fresh realization of the real conditions in the country, 194; a partial list of his activities in the winter of 1905–6, 194–6; on January 18, 1906, delivers an address on "Americanism" at Charleston, South Carolina, and is spoken of as "the most promising of Southern candidates" for the Presidency, 196; the famous dinner in his honour at the Lotos Club in New York, February 3, 1906, at which Colonel Harvey suggests him as a candidate for the Presidency, 196–7; his correspondence gives evidence of belief of many Americans in his availability as a Presidential candidate, 198; does not take the suggestion seriously, 199; delivers his first speech on Jefferson before the Democratic Club of New York, April 16, 1906, 199; addresses the Western Association of Princeton Clubs at Cleveland, 200; told by doctors that he has arteriosclerosis and must give up everything and live a quiet and retired life, 201; closes up his university work, has Professor Hibben appointed acting president of Princeton, and sails for Europe with his family, 203; friends, alumni, and trustees express solicitude, 204; spends a quiet summer at Rydal, in the lake country of England, 204; sails for home October 6th, having promised his doctors to "take special care of myself next winter," 206–7; has a restricted vision of the left eye, and has not fully recovered the control of his hand, but begins a physical discipline in order that he may continue his work, 208; engages secretarial assistant, Gilbert F. Close, 209; under pressure to take part in New Jersey politics, 209; joins the Board of Trustees in urging Dean West to remain at Princeton, 210; the quad struggle, 213–274; begins his fight for the social coördination of Princeton, December 13, 1906, 213; as early as 1897 he had outlined his vision of a new Princeton to Stockton Axson, 215; on December 13, 1906, launches his proposals to transform the upper-class clubs at Princeton, 219–21; his ideas on the subject of a Graduate College opposed to those of Dean West, 223–4; sails for Bermuda for a month of "rest," 225; in Bermuda outlines a series of lectures, to be delivered at Columbia University and later published as *Constitutional Government in the United States*, 226; while in Bermuda speaks on two Sundays in local churches, 226; presents the report of the committee on social reorganization to Princeton Board of Trustees, June 10, 1907, 228–32; understands the vote of the Board of Trustees as authorization for him to proceed with the maturing of his plans, 232–3; not attempting to abolish the upper-class clubs, but to transform them, 235; reverberations of the controversy over the quads reach him on his summer vacation, 236–8; asks Cleveland H. Dodge for a letter to Mrs. Russell Sage, 238–9; authorities outside of Princeton circles approve his quad plan, 239; writes letters explaining his quad plans, 242–4; the tide strong against him, 244–8; defends his plan, saying that it will not destroy class spirit, and that its object is primarily not social, but academic and intellectual, 247; an overwhelming majority of the Princeton faculty stand with him, 249–50; Dr. Henry van Dyke opposes his plan, 250; Dean West writes a letter opposing his quad plans, and he replies to it, 251; Professor John Grier Hibben opposes his quad plans, 253; overburdened with work on his summer vacation in 1907, 255; the Princeton faculty supports him, after momentous meetings, 256–7; some members of the Board of Trustees waver in their support of him, and others grow stauncher, 258–60; the great pressure brought upon him not to enforce his quad proposals, 260; his quad plans defeated at the meeting of the Board of Trustees, October 17, 1907, 261; the defeat of his quad plans a fearful blow to him, 261; thinks of resigning from Princeton, but decides otherwise, 262; begins to consider the political advances that are being made to him, 263; "I have never for a moment thought of giving the fight up..." (November 6, 1907), 264; his new plan to appeal to the alumni, 264–5; suffers another physical breakdown, which Mrs. Wilson attributes to "the loss of the friend he took to his bosom," 266–7; sails for Bermuda, January 18, 1908, 267; his friendship with Mrs. Mary Allen Peck (Mrs. Hulbert) the target of innuendo, 267–9; returns to Princeton February 27th, still suffering from neuritis, 269; plunges again into the quad campaign, 269–70; his health again precarious, he sails for Europe in June, 1908, 271, 276; his quad struggle seems to increase his prestige, 271; elected a member

Wilson, Woodrow—*Continued.*
of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and becomes a member of the Board of the Carnegie Foundation, 272; Princeton students cheer him whenever he appears at their gatherings, 272; given honorary degrees by nine universities, 272; the Graduate College controversy, 275–357; discouraged in June, 1908, 276; some of his friends regard him as a Presidential possibility in 1908, 277; would have declined nomination for Vice-Presidency, 277; visits Scotland, 278; sits for his portrait by Fred Yates, 280; visits Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, 280–1; returns to America, September, 1908, 282; the keynote of his address at the opening of Princeton, September 24, 1908: "The objects of a university [are] *intellectual*," 283; wants to remove the cause of dissension at Princeton —the divided authority between the president of the university and the dean of the Graduate College, 287; does not approve of the compromise to transfer administrative control of the graduate school to a committee of the faculty, but will try it, 290; advises that plans for graduate school submitted by Dean West be simplified, 292; disturbed by efforts to solicit funds for the Graduate College, 293; Dean West shows him William Cooper Procter's letter offering $500,000 for proposed Graduate College provided site is changed, 294; piqued and alarmed by the conditions of Mr. Procter's offer, but hopes for a satisfactory conclusion, 295–6; growth of his prestige, 296–300; beginning to take hold upon the entire nation, 300; Colonel Harvey, in *Harper's Weekly* for May 15, 1909, expects to see him elected Governor of New Jersey in 1910 and nominated for President in 1912, 300; prefers seclusion on his summer vacations, 301; goes to Old Lyme, Connecticut, for his summer vacation in 1909, 302; writes an article, "The Ideal University," for the *Delineator* and one for *Scribner's* magazine, "What is a College For?" 304; his article "The Tariff Make-Believe," in the *North American Review*, October, 1909, 306; sets forth his personal creed in an address at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, 306–8; meets William Cooper Procter in New York, 308; M. Taylor Pyne's resolution at meeting of Board of Trustees to accept Mr. Procter's offer overrides his policies as president of Princeton, 310; acceptance of the Procter gift would mean defeat for him, 310–11; his serious mistake in permitting his opponents to make the site the main issue in the Graduate College controversy, 311; tries to avoid an open quarrel with Dean West, 312; considers his resignation as a solution, 313; asked by Pierce Butler if he would accept presidency of the University of Minnesota, but declines, 313; tries a compromise by which the Swann bequest and the Procter gift could be used separately, 313; again meets Mr. Procter, who will not adjust the terms of his offer, 314, 316; ". . . I seem to have come to the end." 314; his letter to M. Taylor Pyne, in which he says that he cannot remain responsible for the direction of the affairs of Princeton if Mr. Procter's gift is accepted, 314–18; comes out flat-footedly for the rejection of Mr. Procter's gift, 320–1; refuses again to make Dean West the issue of the graduate college controversy, 321; Mr. Procter's acceptance of his compromise proposal surprises and confuses him, 322; asserts that Dean West's ideas and ideals are not those of Princeton, 322; his compromise proposal to Mr. Procter a tactical blunder, 323; at meeting of the Board of Trustees reads a joint communication from the majority members of the faculty committee opposing Dean West's entire conception of a Graduate College, 323–4; the withdrawal of Mr. Procter's offer a triumph for his cause, 325–6; promises Cleveland H. Dodge that he will not allow the inevitable storm of abuse to make him withdraw, 326; sails for Bermuda, February 14, 1910, 326; the storm breaks, 327; attacked for inspiring H. B. Brougham's editorial in the New York *Times*, about the Princeton controversy—and Mr. Brougham gives the actual facts, 328 *footnote*; the country at large approves him, 329–30; hit hard by the controversy, but his conscience is clear, 330–1; returns from Bermuda, the attack on him now concerted and bitter, 331; Dr. Henry van Dyke attacks his quad ideas, 331; much of the criticism of him founded on lies and misrepresentations, but his policy is one of silence, 331–2; President Lowell of Harvard offers to help him in the controversy, 332–3; against the election of Adrian H. Joline as an anti-administration trustee, 334; in an "appeal to the country" goes on a speaking tour, addressing alumni audiences in the East and West, 334–39; his supporters defeated at meeting of Board of Trustees, April 14, 1910, 339–40; unlooses his wrath in alumni address at Pittsburgh, 340–1; his enemies publish his address in a pamphlet entitled "That Pittsburgh Speech," 342; Henry Eckert Alexander predicts his nomination for Governor of New Jersey in 1910 and for the Presidency in 1912, 343; is finding it difficult to keep out of politics, 343–4; with Mr. Joline defeated for trustee-

Wilson, Woodrow—*Continued.*
ship, feels that he can control the situation at Princeton, 344; is again offered the presidency of the University of Minnesota, and of Peabody College, 344 *footnote;* the Isaac C. Wyman bequest for the Graduate College turns the battle against him, 345; in view of the Wyman bequest, says Dean West should remain dean of the graduate school, and accepts defeat in matter of location of the college, 347–8; reserves decision as to his future course as president of Princeton, 348–9; Commencement time, 1910, one of the bitterest periods of his life, 349; attends a dinner at Dean West's house, 350; presents silver cup to M. Taylor Pyne, 350; retains his hold upon students, faculty, and alumni, 351–2; recommends acceptance of Wyman bequest and Procter gift, 352; goes to Lyme, Connecticut, for his summer vacation, in 1910, 352–3; under pressure to consider the nomination for Governorship in New Jersey, 352; nominated by the Democratic party for Governor of New Jersey, September 15, 1910, 354; his ideas and ideals still the living ferment of Princeton, 356; his own final account of the Graduate College controversy, hitherto unpublished, prepared as an answer to a letter which it was rumoured that Grover Cleveland had written, attacking him, 358–60
Wood, Dr. and Mrs., of Princeton, 56–7
Wood, Judge C. A. and Mrs., 76, 77, 78, 79
Woods, Edward A., 343 *footnote*
Woods, Dr. Hiram, 323; 332, 346–7 *footnotes*
Woods, Lawrence C., 341
Wyman, Isaac C., leaves large bequest for Princeton Graduate College, 345

Yates, Fred, portrait painter, meets Wilson in England, in 1906, 204; paints Wilson's portrait, 205; 209 *footnote*; Wilson calls on, in 1908, 279; Wilson sits again for portrait by, 280; his portrait of Wilson in Nassau Hall at Princeton, 280 *footnote;* 282
Yates, Mrs. Fred, 279
Yates, Mary, her diary notes concerning Wilson in 1906, in England, 205
Young, Owen D., 111 *footnote*

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